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Friday
17 Jan. '92

PRIVATE EYE

80p

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

JOHN MAJOR'S CHOICE

Where does their courage come from?

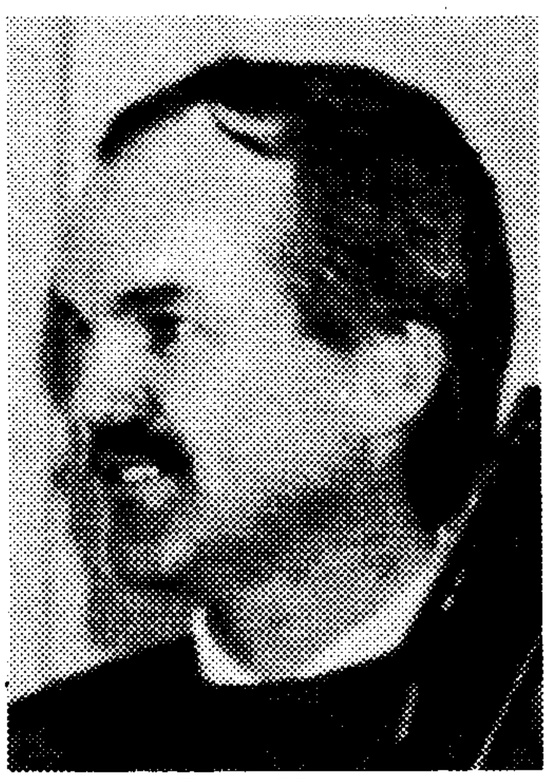
A car screeched through the streets of Guatemala City. As it neared a children's home, it slowed.

Out of its windows erupted a storm of gunfire, pockmarking the white adobe walls and terrifying the children inside.

Bruce Harris, the British social worker who ran the home, knew exactly what the attack meant. It was a warning to get out.

Guatemala City police had killed many of the street children with whom he worked. One boy was kicked to death in an attack so violent that it split his liver. Others were found with their eyes burned out and their tongues ripped from their mouths.

Bruce Harris knew that he might himself be killed. Yet he refused to give up his work. Where did his courage come from?



Bruce Harris.

In Burma last May, Aung San Suu Kyi led a campaign for justice and human rights. Her party won more than 80% of the votes in the first free elections to be held for over 30 years.

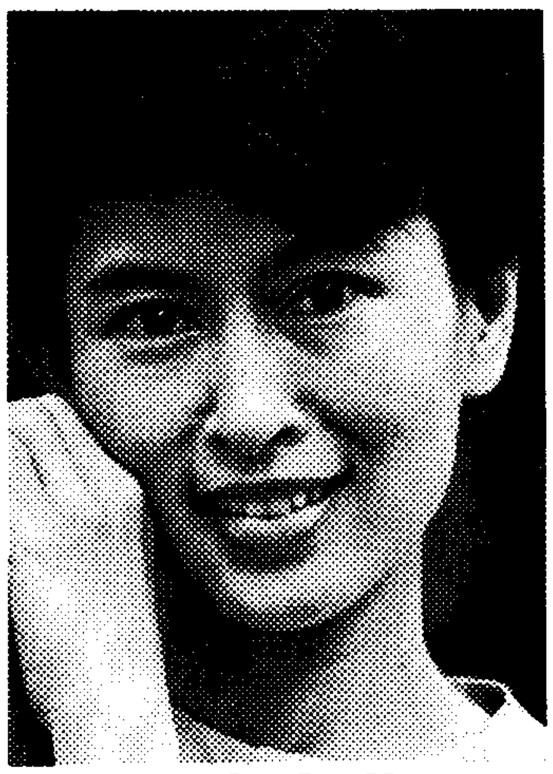
Instead of handing over power, the Burmese regime placed her under house arrest and imprisoned hundreds of her supporters.

After Suu Kyi went on hunger strike in protest, the regime promised to give her people 'fair trials.'

This year she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize but was not allowed to leave Burma to receive it.

Her husband, an Oxford professor, and their two British sons cannot visit her or even communicate with her.

Yet Suu Kyi does not give up. Where does her courage come from?



Aung San Suu Kyi.

In Syria, a man called Riad Al-Turk has been in prison since 1980. Arrested for his political beliefs, he was imprisoned without trial, never charged with any offence.

Riad Al-Turk suffers from kidney failure, chronic heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

He is known to have been severely tortured. Many times he has been rushed to intensive care and kept alive, only to be tortured again, and again.

The Syrians have 38 methods of torture. The 'washing machine' crushes prisoners' fingers in a rotating drum. The 'Syrian Chair' strangles them.

He has not seen his two children for eleven years.

Despite repeated calls there is still no hope of his release. Where does this man get his courage?

Riad Al-Turk.

"I'll tell you a small story which I told in Damascus. I was kept in total and complete isolation for four years. I saw no-one and spoke to no-one apart from a cursory word with my guards when they brought the food.

And one day out of the blue a guard came with a postcard. It was a postcard showing a stained glass window from Bedford showing John Bunyan in jail.

". . . And I turned the card over and there was a message from someone whom I didn't know simply saying 'We remember, we shall not forget. We shall continue to pray for you and to work for all people who are detained around the world.'

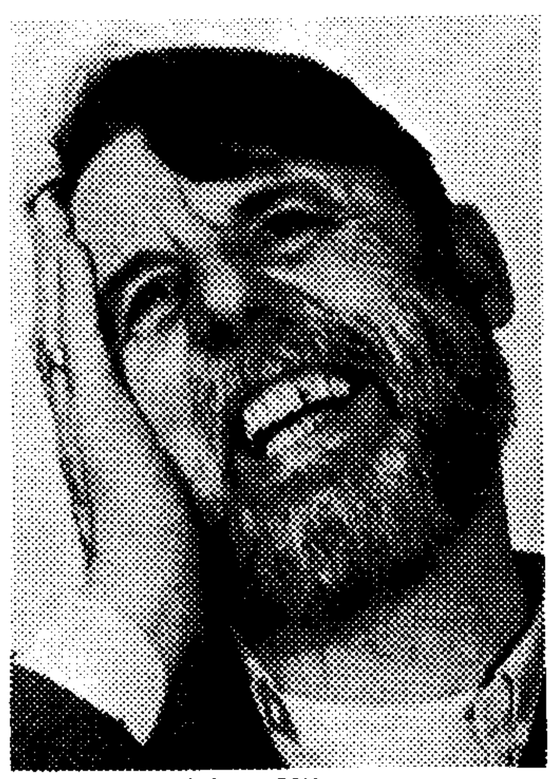
"That thought sent me back to the marvellous work of agencies like Amnesty International and their letter-writing campaigns, and I would say: never despise those simple actions. Something, somewhere will get through to the people you are concerned about as it got through to me . . ."

These were virtually the first words that Terry Waite spoke after his own release from captivity.

Instead of dwelling on his own ordeal, he chose to remind us that in prisons all over the world there are thousands of innocent people, unjustly held in terrible conditions, whose names will never be publicly known.

He urged us to work for their freedom. Not to despise the small help that each of us can give.

Join Amnesty and help campaign for the release of people unjustly imprisoned and tortured. Even the



Terry Waite.

'simple action' of writing a postcard can bring someone hope.

Where does their courage come from? Terry Waite told us.

Their courage comes from you.

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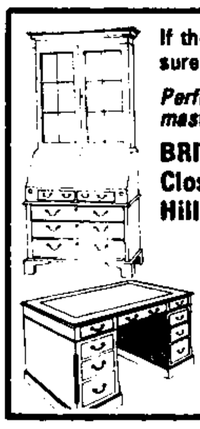

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Gnome

MS RITA Chevrolet has today issued another statement which I hope will end further speculation about the unfortunate incident that occurred last week in Aspen, Colorado.

Ms Chevrolet initially gave a statement to the police suggesting that she had been beaten up by a rich elderly English aristocrat called Lord Gnome.

After consultation with her lawyer *(shurely 'Doctor'? E.S.)*, Ms Chevrolet realised that she had been confused and had meant to say that her injuries were the result of a skiing accident.

She was, she now confirms, attacked by a ski slope, resulting in the medical condition known as *Bimbo bimbalis normalis*.

She took professional advice from a top accountant (*shurely 'Doctor' again? E.S.*) and was advised that she had been entirely mistaken in her suggestion of any physical abuse by any rich elderly English aristocrat called Lord Gnome.

Therefore, the only moral to be drawn from this story is the very real danger for young women in Aspen, particularly on the Black and Blue runs.

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COLOUR SECTION

BY THE TIME the *Eye* appears, the newspapers will no doubt be full of the evidence before a Commons select committee from Dr Christopher Cowley about the Iraqi "supergun", part of which, at the time of an official government embargo on arms to Iraq, was made in Britain by two British firms.

Cowley worked for Dr Bull, the Canadian-born arms manufacturer who, before he was murdered by Israeli intelligence, was making guns for Saddam Hussein (and lots of other people). When parts of the supergun were finally seized by Customs (tipped off by Mossad), Dr Cowley was arrested and charged with breaking the embargo.

Only when the Government found that the making of the supergun — by Walter Somers of Halesowen and Forgemasters of Sheffield — had been actively encouraged by its own security services were the charges dropped (much to the intense embarrassment and fury of HM Customs).

The role of the security services will be examined when the MPs question witnesses from the Ministry of Defence. At long last, the ministry has been ordered to produce witnesses who will answer not just for the civil service but also for that part of it which is responsible for MI5 and MI6. One question likely to be asked with some pertinacity is: how could the security services sanction the building of weapons for sale to a country with which the Government maintains an arms embargo?

Not much is expected from the "king spooks" who give evidence for the ministry. But the select committee would be likely to be told much more if it called Sir Hal Miller, Tory MP for Bromsgrove, as a witness.

Sir Hal, who has occupied high posts in the Tory party hierarchy and whose career in the foreign service has brought him close to MI6, insists that he made inquiries of at least two "responsible people" at the time who made it quite clear to him that arms sales to Saddam Hussein were very much to be encouraged. Indeed, after the Iran-Iraq war ended, much of Britain's economic policy in the Middle East was founded on friendship with the Iraqi dictator.

But will the committee call Sir Hal to testify? Sir Hal, it appears, is unwilling; but he can, if necessary, be "ordered" to appear by a motion in the Commons. Whether the select committee will resort to such ungentlemanly action so soon before a general election is doubtful.

THE RATHER absurd *Paris Match* disclosures that Robert Maxwell may have been roughly handled before he died have been greeted with profound scepticism by Dr Ian West, the Home Office pathologist. But how long will it be before he changes his mind?

Dr West examined Maxwell's body in Tel Aviv and may very well be correct. The problem is that history — in particular, a less celebrated drowning case in which he was involved — shows that Dr West could well have a change of heart.

On 5 August 1980, the body of antique dealer Jonathan Lewis was found in the Arun river, not far from Arundel, West Sussex. Dr West went straight down by train from London and carried out a thorough autopsy. He could find nothing to suggest that the death was anything but accidental, and reported accordingly.

The police promptly put out a press statement, printed by the *Portsmouth Evening News* the following day: "Police," said the report, "have ruled out foul play". Four days later — on 12 August — Dr West was back in the area carrying out a second autopsy on Lewis.

Quite why he went back, after making a full and final report, has never been clear. The assumption is that the police called him back after suspecting that Lewis might have been murdered. Sure enough, this time Dr West found signs on the body which indicated in his view that the antique dealer had been attacked before he drowned.

This was very convenient for the police, who already had a suspect: Lewis's close friend, Colin Wallace, the local council press officer and a former army intelligence officer in Northern Ireland (see *Eyes passim*).

Wallace was later charged and convicted of manslaughter. At Wallace's trial, Dr West said Lewis may well have been knocked out before he died by a blow from the heel of the hand to the bridge of his nose. This blow has puzzled forensic scientists ever since. Much, much later (as the controversy about Wallace's conviction grew) Dr West indicated on Southern Television that he had been told about the blow by someone from the security services — though whether his informant was from the SAS, MI5 or the CIA the doctor was reluctant to disclose.

At the moment, Dr West is pretty sure no one manhandled Maxwell before he died. But who is to say that he may not change his mind and decide, perhaps, that the deadly blow to the bridge of the nose may have been in use on the Lady Ghislaine? If Dr West is in any doubt, he could always ring his old contact in the security services.

SOUTH West Water tells the Cornish press that it is going to sue the *Eye* for our report in the last issue about sewage in the sea off some of the more popular beaches in the county.

Before it does so, we should correct two misprints: sewage bacteria is counted in *coliforms*, not *califorms*; and the article in the EC directive on these matters is 5.2 not 512.

We apologise for these mistakes — but not for the more minor point that the coliform count at Porthgwidden Beach, St Ives, was 36 times the "imperative standard" laid down by the EC directive.

● *More news 'IN THE BACK' – p. 28.*

"It's a private train-spotter"

THE *EYE'S* recent piece about a possible leftward shift in the politics of Murdoch newspapers sparked off plenty of media comment elsewhere. But what does it mean for the editor of *Today*, Cliff Richard-lookalike, Martin Dunn?

The Labour politicians whom *Toady* is suddenly trying to woo are unlikely to be impressed by Dunn — who for several years was Kelvin Mackenzie's loyal right-wing lap-dog at the *Sun* — as captain of a new, caring, left-leaning tabloid. They are more likely to see the political back-flip as a cynical tactic to try to save *Toady* from its plummeting sales graph and heavy losses.

A piece of graffiti referring to Dunn's predecessor had to be removed from the Wapping lavatory recently: "Come back, David Montgomery, all is forgiven." But after his bitter split from the Digger, Montgomery has no chance of being recalled by Rupert — sales-slumps, graffiti and confidence-collapses notwithstanding.

Which is why some veteran *Toady* hacks have started a sweepstake on when Roy Greenslade, the ex-*Mirror* editor who is now a "consultant" at Wapping, will take the helm. The odds are that it will be in good time for the general election.

IT CANNOT be long before Esther Rantzen appears in public to prove that she has given to charity all £250,000 of the damages she recently won from the *People* newspaper (see last *Eye*).

The *Eye* can confidently predict such an outcome after studying a letter written by la Rantzen's lawyers, famous city solicitors Herbert Smith, to the *People* on 8 February last year. The most interesting part reads: "We think it right to tell you in this letter, which we intend to bring to the attention of the court, that our client Esther Rantzen proposes to give the very substantial damages to which she is entitled (after discharge of her legal costs) to Childline and the Childline Educational Trust Fund which is in the course of being set up to assist individual children who have particularly suffered from abuse and for whom the necessary funds to provide specialist hospital treatment or special education or counselling would not otherwise be available."

Before the case went to court, Herbert Smith, on la Rancid's behalf, made several attempts to get permission to announce to the jury that any damages would go to the Childline charity. The *People* naturally resisted this: libel plaintiffs often try to tell the jury they will not take any damages for themselves. Fortunately, the courts seldom allow them to do so for fear that the already ludicrous libel damages might take off into the stratosphere if juries feel they are looting the gutter press to the benefit of a charity.

Nevertheless, Herbert Smith's pledge has never been withdrawn. The idea that such a famous firm of solicitors should allow such a promise written on their own headed notepaper, with the long list of all their distinguished partners underneath, to be overlooked for too long is, of course, unthinkable.

Those *Eye* readers familiar with the case of the Fayed brothers and the lying prospectus by which they took over Harrods and the House of Fraser will know, of course, that the Fayeds' solicitors throughout the Harrods affair were Herbert Smith; and that Herbert Smith vouched for the document about their clients' glorious past which made such an impact at the Office of Fair Trading and the Department of Trade and Industry.

When inquiries by DTI inspectors revealed that the document was a pack of lies, the enormous resources of Herbert Smith were put to proving that the solicitors had no idea that their clients were telling lies and had not got the means of independent inquiry to check whether the information they passed on was true or false. This impressed the inspectors who concluded, majestically: "We do not blame Herbert Smith".

With such a fine record behind the firm it is clear that Herbert Smith will be making all haste, with their client Esther Rantzen, to make sure that the commitment they gave on her behalf last February is honoured to the full — and publicly seen to be so.

THE terrible fuss over low life TV pundit Garry Bushell has reached epic proportions.

Our Gal was hired by Brian Hitchens, editor of the *Daily Star*, after the deranged right-wing columnist had a shouting match with his editor at the *Sun*, the silver-tongued Kelvin McKenzie.

Bushell never really liked the refined environment of the *Star*, and Kelvin for some reason hankered to get the foul-mouthed brute back on the payroll. He duly returned to the *Sun* last week at a salary of £48,500 plus expenses and loyally set upon his former colleagues at the *Daily Star*, calling them winos and pissheads.

This did not go down too well and *Star* executives rushed to the high court last Tuesday to get an injunction restraining Bushell from repeating the accusations. Bushell, however, produced an affidavit which caused counsel for the *Star* to advise the paper to withdraw its action; and it promptly did so. Why?

The affidavit described a lunch Bushell had with Nigel Blundell, the *Star*'s executive editor. Bushell related how Blundell, after consuming five large whiskies and two bottles of beer, then complained about the drinking habits of *Star* features editor Mike Parker, saying: "When he [Parker] gets pissed and starts hitting barmaids we close ranks and make sure he gets home OK."

Bushell also revealed an incident in which Blundell returned from a five-hour lunch and started an argument with the deputy editor. He was later driven home by an assistant editor only to return to the office later.

There was also the more worrying incident before Christmas in which after a four-hour lunch *Star* hack Peter Hill marched into Bushell's office armed with a crossbow. Bushell's affidavit stated that Hill, unsteady on his feet, loaded up with a pencil and then fired it at his colleagues, damaging a chair. "He then asked me if I could get him an unlicensed pistol because he lived in Brixton and was worried about being burgled," stated Bushell.

While Bushell and Kelvin may have kissed and made up, others in Wapping are less enthusiastic about the return of the prodigal *Sun* writer.

THE *Independent* of 9 January finally caught up with the *Eye* stories about Brian Nelson, the military intelligence agent who infiltrated the Protestant ultras so effectively that he became the boss of "intelligence" for the Ulster Defence Association.

After nearly two years in custody, and a furious argument in the Cabinet, Nelson is at long last on trial.

His story is told at great length in the *Independent* by two authors, one of whom is John Ware. *Eye* readers will recall that the last time Ware contributed to a full page in the *Independent* was in September 1987 when he and the *Indy*'s Northern Ireland correspondent, David McKittrick, delighted the Government on both sides of the water with a full-scale denunciation of Colin Wallace and Fred Holroyd.

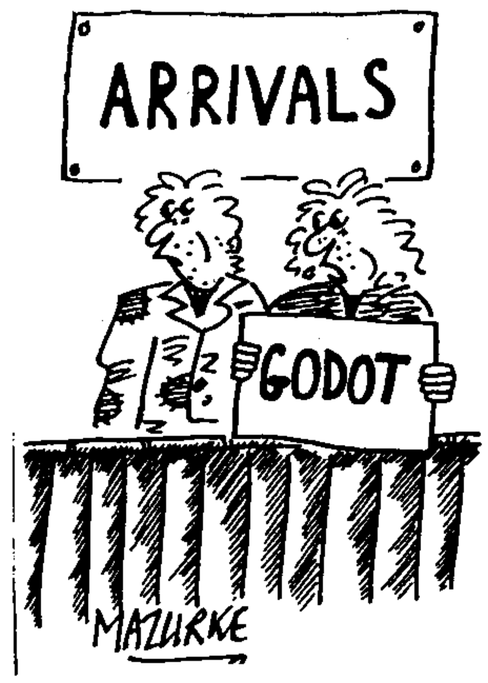
So effective was this denigration that Wallace got £30,000 from the Government, which admitted nobbling an appeals tribunal at the Ministry of Defence, and Holroyd is suing the *Indy* for libel.

NEWLY-APPOINTED business editor of the *Sunday Times* John Cassidy has got off to a flying start. On Sunday 5 January the Business News section published no fewer than three apologies.

Cassidy wrote to his staff: "We are in the humiliating position of having to publish three separate apologies. One is to Victor Kiam, another to British Airways and the third, and most galling of all, is to the *Mail on Sunday*. None of these 'mistaken' facts were checked before publication, and they were all needless."

Doubtless wanting to cover himself, "Butch" faxed the memo to his master, Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill, who was in Aspen. (Although last Sunday the rag carried a pisspoor non-story about the Killer Bimbos of Aspen, Neill was actually over there to discuss Sky's purchase of Thames TV with the Digger.)

Having seen the Cassidy fax, a furious Brillo



scribbled the following: "John, I'm glad you sent this. This mistakes [*sic*] were quite horrendous. Persistent offenders should be left in no doubt that their jobs are on the line." Quite.

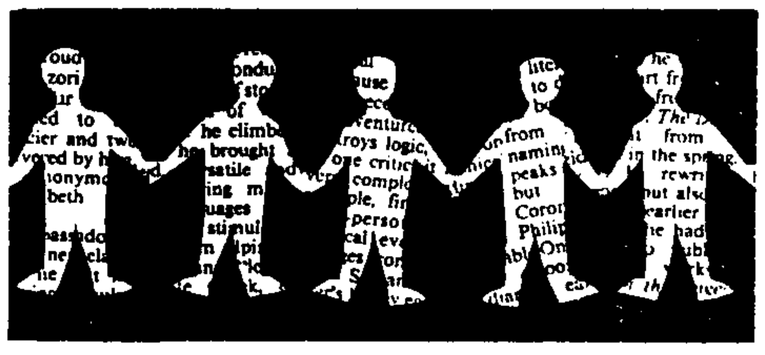
SINISTER Canadian press baron Conrad Black had a pleasant distraction from his matrimonial upheavals when, the week before Christmas, he won control of Australia's Fairfax group — which includes the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the Melbourne *Age* and the daily *Australian Financial Review*.

The Montreal Moosehead denied that he had a "hit list" of senior Fairfax hacks whom he wanted to sack. "I don't see what Fairfax employees have to worry about," he said. "No one in Fairfax is earmarked for busting". But it has since transpired that two of Black's lieutenants in London — Max "Hitler" Hastings and the *Daily Telegraph's* ample-girthed foreign editor, Nigel Wade — have been busily drawing up unflattering character assessments of the Australian newspapers' editors for their boss.

A memo written on 19 December by Wade in London (which somehow leaked to *The Australian*) claims that John Alexander, editor-in-chief of the *Morning Herald*, is "as wet as a Queensland summer" and "has been right out of touch for some time".

Meanwhile, "Hitler" Hastings himself has piled on the pressure by writing a memo to Black's henchman in Australia, Daniel Colson, about John Alexander. It is "odd", Hastings comments, that the *Sydney Morning Herald's* editor-in-chief should be on "holiday" in Italy, "when one might have thought that if he was a serious player he would want to get home fast". As Hastings must surely know, Alexander has in fact been in Italy on compassionate leave, following a ghastly recent bereavement.

To add to the apprehension of hacks Down Under, Black has now announced that the Fairfax papers "could stand some cross-fertilisation". He is thus arranging for Hitler Hastings — as well as the *Daily Telegraph's* managing director, promotional manager, advertising manager and circulation manager — to fly out to Australia soon, "suggesting some things that might be useful". How long before the *Sydney Morning Herald* is forced to carry *Hello!*-style photos of Patricia Hodge and Lady Helen Windsor on its front page every day?



HOW THEY ARE RELATED

LAST Friday the *Indescribablyboring*'s diarist, Alex Renton, announced the result of his competition for cheerful thoughts about the coming year. The winner of the prize bottle of champagne was "Lady Fergusson, from Maybole, Ayrshire, who is expecting her first grandchild on 16 January".

What Renton neglected to mention was that Lady Fergusson of Maybole, Ayrshire, is his aunt.

WITH THE approach of the election, Sir Bob Reid's chances of being allowed to resign as head of British Rail when Malcolm Riffraff's crazy White Paper comes out later this month are non-existent.

He has already been somewhat crudely reminded that he did not have to wait for his knighthood and that his resignation would be regarded not only as gross ingratitude but as high treason. He will no doubt be replaced, if the Tories win the election, by some stony-faced accountant who will set up the new BR Holdings and Realisation Agency, flog off the plum routes to the likes of Jeffrey Sterling and Richard Branson and then contract or shut down most of the rest.

The idea of resurrecting the Victorian regional railway companies is of course totally laughable, as they could not possibly be profitable enough. Britain will thus become the only European country without a national railway network, just as we are also on course to becoming the only European country without a steel industry.

ON THE very day the last *Eye* reported how the powerful car lobby, through its puppet, the Department of Transport, was gradually killing off Britain's bus services, Wales's largest bus company, National Welsh, went into receivership.

It was the fourth sizeable bus company to do so in south-east Wales in fewer than five and a half years of deregulated buses.

The article claimed that most bus companies, including the larger ones, would make bigger profits by leaving their money in a bank: National Welsh's net assets have been estimated at a mere £30,000, after deduction of about £5 million of debt.

Bus usage is falling across Britain but not in London, which just happens to be the only place where buses have yet to be deregulated. The Tories' commitment to privatising the capital's buses is further evidence of their desire to ruin services to the obvious benefit of those with vested interests in cars.

THE FUTURE of Roger Godsiff, would-be MP for Birmingham Small Heath (see *Eyes passim*), looks increasingly precarious following secret talks between top Kinnock aides and the city's Labour leaders last week.

Despite denials all round, Neil Stewart, one of Kinnock's closest advisers, discussed the Godsiff affair with the city's Labour leader, Dick Knowles, his deputy Albert Bore and others, the *Eye* can reveal.

The discussions were not about how to help Godsiff, who is increasingly being seen as a dead duck; instead they were to determine who should replace him if the party's national executive committee meeting on 29 January removes him.

Readers will recall how Godsiff's manipulation of the union block vote aroused fury in Small Heath, splitting the local party and prompting three major internal investigations. If he is removed, the suspension of the local party means a candidate would have to be imposed — hence the secret talks.

One name urged on Kinnock's aide by Bore, Knowles, et al was social services chair Councillor Najma Hafeez, whose unpopularity in Small Heath was shown by her resounding defeat by both Godsiff and his main rival, Councillor Muhammad Afzal. Quite coincidentally Hafeez is a loyal Knowles acolyte — and the wife of failed MP and local councillor Albert Bore.

IF the Labour Party really wants to win the next election, perhaps it should employ people who can read and spell the name of the country Neil Kinnock hopes to lead.

The party's "Made in Britain" electoral campaign got off to a typically dismal start last week thanks to the illiteracy of party hacks at Labour's grandly-named Campaigns and Communications Directorate in Walworth Road.

Their report of the unveiling speech by shadow chancellor John Smith was riddled from start to finish with basic typing and spelling errors: "*High tech produscts... European Comunity... MRlrtgatge repogessions...*" and, most impressive of all: "*Recovery in Briatin must be investment led.*"

But should *Briatin* be led by Labour? Those worried by the prospect of a spend, spend, spend Labour administration being in situ by the summer should take consolation: who in the party can do joined up writing and sign the cheques?

THE TAPES at the centre of the Owen Oyston Affair (see *Eyes passim*) would now appear to have attracted the attention of Preston's Inspector Knacker.

This follows the article in the last *Eye* which concerned recorded conversations between Sir Peter Blaker, Tory MP for Blackpool South, and Michael Murrin, the Preston-based "investigator" hired by a coven of high Tories to look into the affairs of socialist millionaire Owen Oyston.

As we reported, Blaker had informed Murrin that the libel action being brought against him by the Chief Constable of Lancashire, Brian Johnson, had been dropped — or at least that it would be dropped if Murrin did not repeat the alleged libel. Murrin did not repeat the libel; but matters did go further: Murrin is to appear in the high court next month.

Shortly after the last *Eye* appeared, Murrin heard from his local police. They were very interested in all his taped conversations with various senior Tories. This surprised him somewhat as he had had little or no contact with the police since 1983. He responded to the latest request, however, by providing three files and the tapes which had been detailed in the *Eye*.

Shortly after, the police came back. They wanted *all* the tapes — and the originals, at that. The one tape the police did not get, however, was the one which recorded the Blaker-Murrin conversation about Chief Constable Johnson.

No doubt there are perfectly good reasons for the police to seek tapes at this stage and, no doubt, the additional request for more tapes has everything to do with ongoing enquiries in the Preston area and nothing at all to do with the Johnson-Murrin action which Murrin intends to defend.

'Backbiter'

GREAT CONMEN No 94

THE sentencing of Oxford graduate and Dangerous Sports Club founder David Kirke to nine months' jail for fraud finally allows us to reveal the extent of his lunatic deceptions.

Born David Potter, he was expelled from Wellington where his father was a housemaster. At Oxford he was known as "Porno" Potter, read English at Corpus Christi and obtained a third. Since then virtually his only occupation has been to run the Dangerous Sports Club, whose finances he controlled.

In more extravagant moments he claimed to have been attached to US Air Force Intelligence at Edwards Air Force base in California, and to have been seconded to the Jordanian Army, in which role, he used to boast tearfully, he "lost 15,000 of my boys."

In September 1990 he claimed to have been called to Washington by Secretary of State James Baker and Defence Secretary Dick Cheney to discuss how to guarantee a 3:1 air superiority for the imminent Gulf War. The following month he phoned friends in London to say he was doing "extremely highly classified" work for the Thai air force.

In Eire, he is wanted for running out on a £7,000-plus hotel bill, covering a week's entertainment for friends, and has twice failed to appear in court in Dublin. In Italy, he is wanted for disappearing with a rented 1989 Mercedes Benz from Hertz in Rome.

Back home, he conned goods and services out of dozens of unfortunates. A firm of builders in Islington was owed £1,300 for improvements to a lock-up garage where Kirke kept a Harrod's sofabed; a florist in Telford, Gloucestershire, was owed money for countless fronds that Kirke showered on a 17-year-old schoolgirl in a vain attempt at courtship. His stings also included the wife of a garage proprietor in Chaddington, Oxfordshire, who had driven several miles to rescue "his" Mercedes with cans of petrol; and the Bell Hotel in Charlbury, Oxfordshire (victims of that other great conman, Wilfred De'Ath).

At the end of last year Kirke admitted five charges of deception and asked for 56 similar offences to be taken into account.

Sally Deedes

LAST WEEK the *Standard, Mail* and *Telegraph* reported how tenants of the Crown Estates, many of them pensioners, had been forced out of their homes in and around Regent's Park — some after 35 years' occupancy — by the increase in their rents.

The *Standard* wrote: "The Crown Estate [nominal head, the Queen, but answerable to the Treasury] is re-fixing rents on the Nash houses after the expiry of seven- and ten-year leases. Legislation in 1980 brought it under the Rent Act and forced it to charge fair rents determined by the Rent Officer. Later legislation enabled it to charge what it wanted for new leases and it considers itself generous in asking less than the market price."

In fact the Crown Estates is doing nothing of the sort. Each assessment made by Camden's fair rents officer has been overruled by a Crown Estates appeal panel of three, and his figures more than doubled.

One tenant asked two estate agents, the Grosvenor Estate Agency and Anscombe & Ringland, for an independent assessment of the rental value of his house. His home, according to both, *might* attract around £20,000 a year — but only with difficulty since it had only one bathroom. The appeal panel ignored this advice and promptly put the rent up to £29,000, clearly disregarding any attempt at "market values".

Those forced out include an elderly husband and wife, one of whom had suffered a stroke and the other who was crippled with arthritis. The Crown insisted that they paint their property at a cost of £4,000 — before being allowed to leave a house they could no longer afford to live in! Another pensioner, who had agreed to pay the new rent of £12,000 a year, found her rent raised by the humane appeal panel to £23,000 and had to leave her lifelong home.

If this were to make any financial sense at all, the vacated properties would be put on the market and sold. But in today's climate the Crown Estates maintains this to be impossible. Instead, it has allowed students to move in and pay no rent so long as they ward off any would-be squatter, while other houses remain empty.

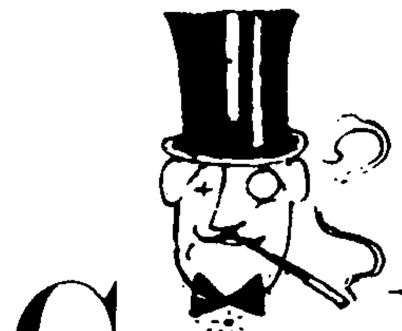
Most tenants who have left are old and frail and, being too terrified to argue, have simply packed their bags and left. But now a tenants' association has been formed to fight the Crown Estates, whose pettiness seems to know no bounds.

For example, on taking a lease from the Crown, each tenant is issued with a thick book of the conditions of tenure. One directive was that every four years the tenant was to paint his or her house with lead-based paint (which for safety reasons had been largely discontinued in the 50s). No amount of argument would move the powers that be. The tiny anomaly was only removed when it was announced that the Queen's fleet of cars was to be changed to non-leaded petrol.

NOT CONTENT with raising its fares this week, London Transport made a quick profit on its weekly three-zone travelcard over Christmas.

The usual card cost £13.80 (it is going up to £14.80) and the travel card bought on 22 December cost that much — even though there was no service at all on Christmas Day and that it should only have cost £11.83.

No doubt LT will use this little "stocking filler" to help pay for the £40 million worth of urgent safety improvements it has just been ordered to make over the next three years.



Grovel

WHY, I wonder, did my publicity-shy chum Jeffrey Archer choose the second week in January for his long-awaited pilgrimage to Kurdistan?

Viewers of afternoon television may have noticed that *Behind the Headlines*, the BBC show which Jeffrey co-hosts every Thursday, last week addressed itself to the question of prostitution, with the assistance of studio guest Lindi St Clair, aka "Miss Whiplash".

When Jeffrey first heard this was in the offing some weeks earlier, he became most indignant and said he couldn't possibly chair a discussion on this — to him — embarrassing subject. But the producer was adamant, as was Jeffrey's fellow presenter, Tony Banks MP.

It was, no doubt, a complete coincidence (albeit a happy one) that Jeffrey announced soon afterwards that he would be unavailable for that particular programme, having decided to take himself off to the Kurdish hills. His place was taken by another fun-loving Tory, Gyles Brandreth.

MY OLD FRIEND Liz Tilberis, editor of *Vogue*, has finally found a way to escape from under the thumb of Nicholas Coleridge, Condé Nast's UK managing director.

Soon after he was made its editorial director, Coleridge poached Alexandra Shulman from *Vogue*, where she had been features editor, to edit *GQ*. This annoyed Tilberis, who banned Coleridge from the *Vogue* office (in the same building as his own) and even removed his name from the magazine's masthead for a while.

However, with his recent promotion to managing director, Tilberis could no longer avoid regular contact with Coleridge, and so the prospect of editing the US title *Harper's Bazaar* for a $600,000 salary must have seemed doubly attractive.

Meanwhile, Coleridge himself was almost the cause of an international incident when returning from a new year holiday in Morocco. He arrived at the airport weighed down with the local currency, and when told that it was illegal to take Moroccan currency out of the country, attempted to spend it at the airport. This, too, was against the rules; and, angered by this petty restriction, Coleridge proceeded to tear up his banknotes. Within minutes he was arrested for destroying the king's image and it was only thanks to his French-speaking wife that he was released on the condition that he signed a written apology and an undertaking not to destroy the king's image ever again.

● *TO THE Garrick Club, where a thoroughly unsavoury incident in the Ladies Powder Room over Christmas has shaken even the club's boorish misogynists out of their usual torpor.*

Not so much a lavatory, more a scented sanctuary of sapphic repose, the powder room is the club's main concession to women: it has a love-seat, profusions of velvet drapery, exquisitely-framed pictures and is thickly carpeted.

In this exotic ambience, two guests at a recent private supper party were found lying in mid-embrace on the floor. This little "cottage" industry must be regarded as something of a setback for the club's female membership lobby. If this is how ladies behave when they are merely guests, imagine what they would get up to if they were admitted as members.

Pseuds Corner

She [Mary Archer] was conscious of her cleverness from infancy. "I remember on the bus, looking around at all those amazingly old, dull people staring into space as the bus jolted along the Epsom Road, wondering if they were thinking interesting things, or were they as dull inside as they looked outside? I think that's the reaction of a clever child."

Sunday Times

They started discussing the voice of the penis with me. Seriously. To them, the voice was much too deep — sexually offensive, they kept saying, because it was a macho kind of voice. They kept saying: "In this country the penis has a different voice." I remember myself yelling at them: "But in Europe the penis speaks this way." There were meetings about this. I was always the only woman, and I could hear this voice ticking away in everyone's head: "What do you know about the voice of a penis?"

DORIS DORRIE on "Me and Him"
Sight & Sound

The writing's not bad for an old guy, I guess and, yeah, maybe now I fear the loss of my soul. When I wrote my first computer poem I was anxious that I would be suffocated by these layers of consumerist suffering. Would old Dostoevsky have ever used one of these babies? I wondered, and then I said — "hell, yeah!"

CHARLES BUKOWSKI
Guardian

"His [Nicholas Coleridge's] manners are very good," [Dominic] Lawson went on. "He's thoroughly civil, treats people with immaculate courtesy."

"Do you think he's sincere?"

"Yes. I remember one occasion when I stood Nicholas up for lunch, and I called him to apologise, and he sent me a thank-you letter for apologising."

Independent on Sunday

ROSE PETAL SANDWICHES

When made with the whitest of white bread and bright pink rose petals these are incredibly pretty. Damask roses have the strongest flavour, but even this is faint, though wonderful. The texture is also interesting.

METHOD

(Start one day in advance.) Line a dish with rose petals, then place in it some butter loosely wrapped in its own paper. Cover the whole with more rose petals, pressing them closely together until the dish is full. Put it in a cool larder (or refrigerator) overnight. Then cut thin slices of white bread and spread them with the butter, make into sandwiches, and place a single layer of overlapping rose petals on top of the butter so that the edges of the petals show outside the sandwiches. (Makes eight small sandwiches.)

ARABELLA BOXER
Book of English Food

CONTRIBUTORS: K.F.J. Nolan, Francis Wright, Mark Wilson, Rosemary Hill, K.J. Owens.

£10 paid for entries

"Can you remember what you were doing when the Kennedy film was shot?"

I AM pleased to report that the deranged American conman Ira Gale, who specialises in persuading Bond Street galleries to "lend" him expensive works of art (see recent *Eyes passim*), is having less success in the pukka world of antique furniture.

In the past month he has had a blitz on the upmarket antique shops in Mount Street, but, according to *Antique* magazine, has come away empty-handed.

He told shop-owners he was looking for 16th-century tables and chairs from Italy to furnish a "Florentine restaurant" which he intended to open in Bond Street. Taking a fancy to a £4,000 walnut table at Toynbee-Clarke Interiors, he demanded to have it at "trade prices". Daphne Toynbee-Clarke, the owner, asked why he should expect a discount since he didn't seem to be a dealer.

"What do you think I am if not a dealer?" an affronted Gale demanded.

"Frankly, my dear," Mrs Toynbee-Clarke told him, "I think you're an actor."

IN DUBLIN, I am regaled with stories about the late Cap'n Bob and his brown-nosing of premier Charles Haughey.

Like the good socialist he was, in the mid-eighties Maxwell was responsible for closing down Europrint, a printing company in the depressed suburb of Coolock, putting hundreds out of work. The site became a waste ground and was soon occupied by a group of travelling caravan-dwellers.

No one objected to their indecorous presence until last year when Haughey, as Taoiseach, was due to host a European summit. Sadly, the travellers could be seen from the road to be used by the visiting Euro bigwigs en route to their audience with the hideously rich premier. Maxwell happily acquiesced in the summary eviction of the travellers on ludicrous "security grounds" and the site has since been turned into a cineplex, half-owned by a Maxwell subsidiary.

WHO can be responsible, I wonder, for an outrageous spoof article "adapted" from a recent flattering *Financial Times* interview with the chairman of BP, Bob Horton?

The spoof, published on pink paper, shockingly portrays the ambitious Mr Horton as an arrogant megalomaniac. Even worse for one of Britain's biggest companies (though not quite the biggest, as it was before Mr Horton took over) is that the spoof has been gobbled up by sniggering BP workers and even openly laughed at.

If I were Mr Horton, I would ask security to check out all those ungrateful BP workers who got their redundancy notices four days before Christmas. If that fails, I would have a close look at the 50 staff who were posted to the US and had the postings withdrawn as soon as they had sold their houses (cheaply) and all their furniture. These people, I am told, are disgustingly irreverent and have not even been impressed by the heroic attempts of BP management consultants to get across the message that the firm is like a family.

Incidentally, why wasn't Bob in the new year's honours list? Most BP chairmen get there within a year of taking office — and Bob's been overall chairman since March 1990.

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

IT IS sometimes difficult to distinguish between incompetence and malice, for both can produce the same destructive result. This is conspicuously the case with British Rail, for the incompetents and failures who run that sad organisation are destroying the country's railway system even without the help of the malign policies of the Conservative Government.

BR has shown itself incapable of designing new trains that do not break down, while the preposterous saga of the Channel Tunnel route to King's Cross shows that the heirs to Stephenson and Brunel can no longer plan, design and build new railways and stations with intelligence and common sense, let alone genius. Citizens of the nation that invented railways, weep for your past, present — and future!

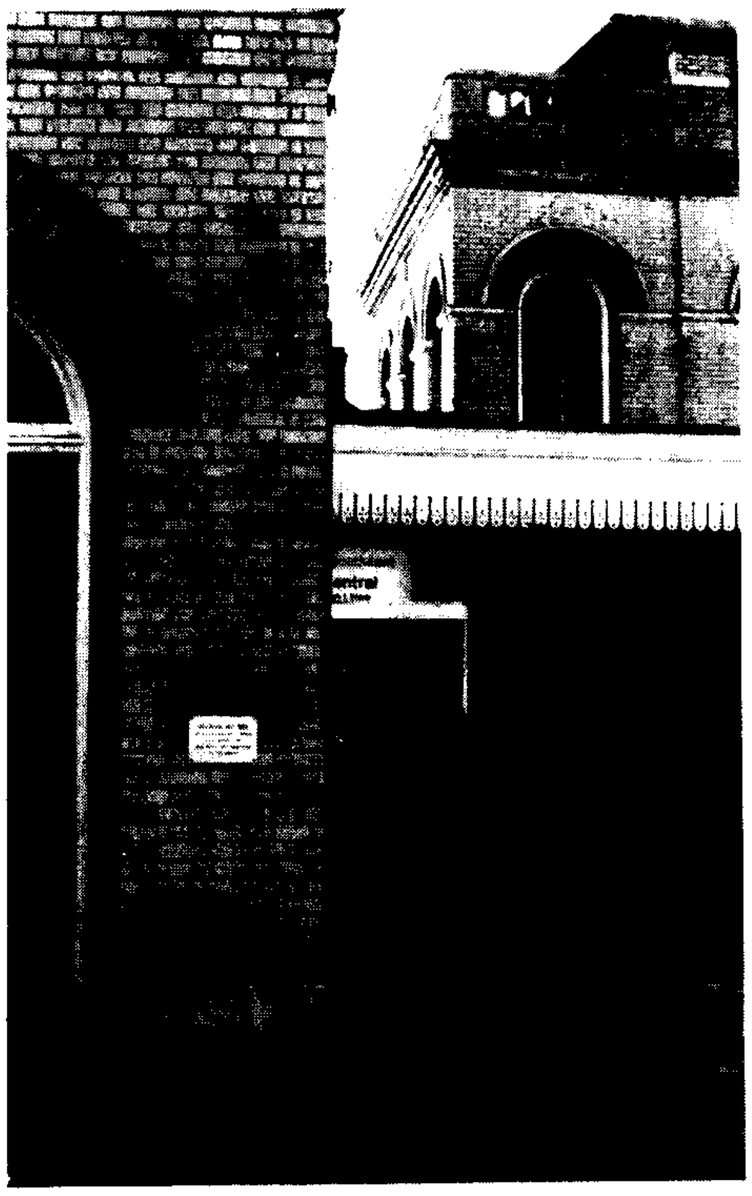
But malice there certainly once was in the nationalised railway service. It can now clearly be seen that the Beeching era stank of corruption, when policies were formulated solely to benefit commercial interests while the ruthless pruning of the system did little to reduce costs but much to reduce the utility and efficiency of the railways. The only beneficiary, of course, was the motor car industry.

A favourite ploy of that shameful period was to deter passengers from travelling by train by destroying sound and substantial station buildings and replacing them with cheap shacks, or nothing. The result was that a line looked as if it was closed even before that goal had been achieved. The process was called modernisation, even though the basic need to protect the waiting passenger from the elements has not changed over a century — and will not.

Well, British Rail says it is doing better now: it calls passengers "customers", serves sandwiches that are not stale and is no longer trying to demolish St Pancras. So times have changed. Or have they?

On 17 December, to the surprise of station staff, demolition contractors moved in to destroy the building and platform canopy on the east side of the tracks at Acton Central Station. This was illegal, for the building lies in a conservation area and the local authority was not informed in advance.

Acton Central was built in 1876 and was one of the



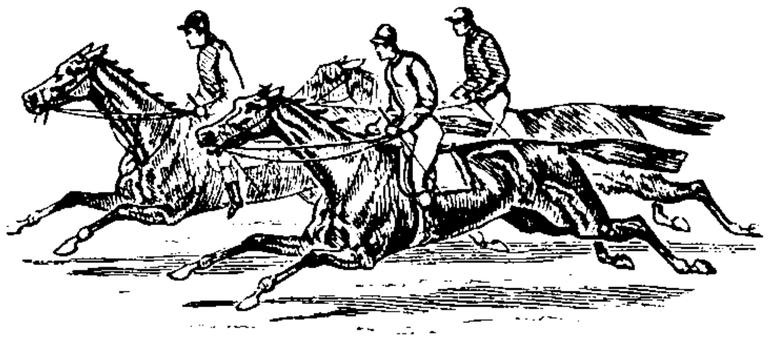
very few remaining decent stations on the North London Line, for most have been replaced by small glass shacks on windswept platforms. The new "Pevsner" of North West London describes it as a "handsome station building... the platforms still with their pretty ironwork and fringed canopies". British Rail made no attempt to dismantle and retain these features, although decorative railway ironwork has long been recognised as one of the glories of Victorian architecture. Instead, it was smashed up with a sledge-hammer. Malice indeed.

This sudden secret attack on Acton Central may seem to be in the tradition of pre-emptive strikes on fine buildings in imminent danger of being listed, as with Sir Nigel Broackes and the Firestone Factory and Archbishop Winning and St Benedict's, Drumchapel (*Eyes passim*), although one might well doubt if the third-rate bureaucrats who now comprise most of BR's staff are capable of such imaginative and resourceful thinking. However, the fact that the demolition took place a week before Christmas, when it might be confidently assumed that the relevant authorities would be incapable of a swift response, suggests a degree of conspiracy. BR had planned the demolition three months before and hoped to dispose of the rest of the station soon after the new year. Fortunately, however, this thuggery has backfired: to their credit, both Ealing and English Heritage acted with vigour and an enforcement notice suspending demolition was served on BR on 18 December, and now the more substantial buildings on the west side of the tracks are being considered for spot-listing.

Perhaps BR will ignore the listing and pull them down anyway — it is ruthless or incompetent enough to do this. The organisation seems quite prepared to flout planning laws, claiming that it is "complicated" to bother to try to find out if their buildings are listed or stand in conservation areas — although this is something private individuals or companies are obliged to do. But why has British Rail bothered to behave so disgracefully, so offending the local community and revealing that the leopard has not changed its spots? The North London Line is not now threatened with closure, after all.

The answer is sinister and disturbing. Although they shelter passengers and give visible coherent form to the railway network, old buildings are perceived by BR's dim marketing men as "loss making" and so a liability. And if British Rail is to be privatised, liabilities must rapidly be disposed of to make the system more attractive to potential purchasers. So the Government's so-called transport policies may well induce a new Beeching-style era of destruction and vandalism. Beware, beware, beware!

'Piloti'



Sporting Life

MARTIN PIPE'S extraordinary hold on the critical faculties of large sections of the racing press has been demonstrated once again by reactions to the recent twin triumphs of Carvill's Hill, the ex-Irish trained chaser who has been in Pipe's care since last summer.

When Carvill's Hill was winning races by a distance at Leopardstown and Punchestown a few seasons ago, he was invariably slagged off in Britain as a laughable talking horse who could never be taken seriously as a Gold Cup candidate. But now his victory in the Coral Welsh National at Chepstow in December, only his second run for Pipe, has been hailed by the likes of John Karter in the *Sunday Times* and by the BBC's Richard Pitman, who is currently writing a book about Pipe, as one of the finest steeplechasing performances of the post war era.

Pipe, we are led to believe, has completely re-broken the massive ten year old gelding who has never been correctly trained or ridden before. Over in Ireland there is distress bordering on furious indignation at the extent to which the horse's Irish trainer, Jim Dreaper, has been written out of the story. Dreaper supporters, like former Gold Cup winning jockeys Tommy Carberry, Frank Berry and Pat Taaffe, believe Pipe is extremely lucky to have been entrusted with a mature and experienced horse who was broken long ago by other hands in another place.

They point to the fact that Carvill's Hill won 14 of his 21 races for Dreaper, including a 15-length annihilation of older and more experienced performers in the 1989 Vincent O'Brien Gold Cup, and they feel that what he showed at Chepstow was no different to what he's been showing for the past six years — namely that he's a horse with a powerful and relentless gallop who is still in no sense a natural or reliable jumper of fences.

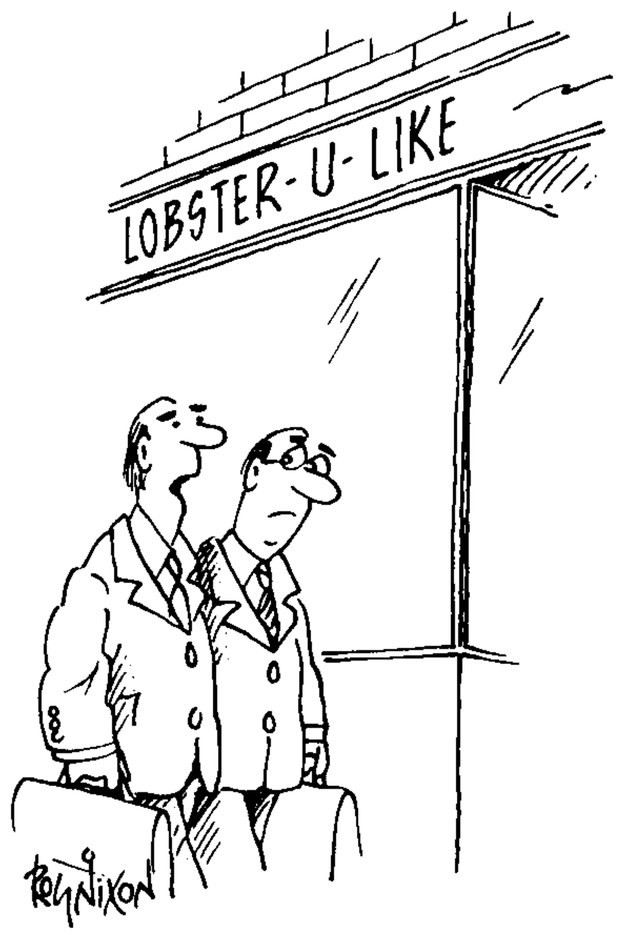
Pipe's apparent indifference to Irish sensitivity on the subject underlines his uneasy grasp of public relations in general. Those in the domestic population who are unlikely to be cheering if Carvill's Hill does win the Gold Cup are the residents of Culmstock, the Devon village adjoining Pipe's Nicholashayne stable.

They are complaining angrily to their district and county councils that Pipe has carved out a track across a piece of common land at Maidendown, near Culmstock, where he exercises his horses, and say that he is trying to deny them access to this land even though they have traditionally enjoyed rights over it for generations.

Culmstock parish councillors, supported by the Open Spaces Society, have formed an action group to establish and defend the villagers' legal position. In November a packed parish council meeting was told by Air Vice Marshall Donald Atlee, former Conservative chairman of Mid Devon Council, that Pipe was acting well within his rights in withdrawing access. The villagers, unconvinced of Atlee's impartiality on the subject, have since sought an urgent meeting to discuss the matter with Pipe personally. So far he has been unable to tell them when such a meeting might take place.

Much of the land at Nicholashayne has been accumulated over the years on an ad hoc basis by Pipe's shrewd bookmaker father, David. His rise from being an insignificant layer at Taunton dog track in the 50s to being a substantial property owning millionaire is one of West Country racing's most intriguing stories.

'Major Bonkers'



"Someone thinks the recession is over"

ME TV

The Good Guys

(LWT)

THE RISE of actor power in Hollywood has, not surprisingly, been greeted with considerable mirth in British media circles. As the "perfectionism" of such notorious foot-stampers as Dustin Hoffman alters forever the way films are made, the wise and ponytailed heads of Soho and Covent Garden have chuckled indulgently and agreed that it couldn't happen here. As indeed it couldn't, as we don't make any films anyway.

Nonetheless, British television has recently been experiencing a similar phenomenon, if one a little less threatening to overall artistic standards. British actors of a certain rank — well known in this country, but unwilling to move to America and end up in dim mini-series like Christopher Cazenove — have given up the endless games of tennis with which they fill their days and instead are setting up their own production companies.

And not the usual sort of production companies actors set up when they have nothing better to do. Real production companies. Ones that make programmes. Actor power, in a suitably English and muted form, has arrived.

Needless to say, certain fundamental differences between normal drama and actor drama have already been identified. Most British actors and directors, after all, lean towards realism in one form or another, which often means actors not being photographed on their best side. With the actor in charge, such realistic pretensions can be safely jettisoned and the production dedicated instead to an infinitely more sensible and worthy cause — making the actor look good.

The most successful of these actors-turned-producers so far is Nigel Havers, whose Havahall has recently made two drama series for LWT in quick succession, both, by remarkable coincidence, starring Nigel Havers.

A Perfect Hero featured the dashing thespian as an over-age World War II pilot, horribly scarred in the Battle of Britain. Unfortunately, certain factors conspired to blunt the impact of this potentially interesting theme. First, Havers chose to keep his trademark floppy layered hair, an anachronism so blatant one wonders why he didn't go all the way and get a Mohican. Then, after his character's crash and hideous injuries, Havers emerged from plastic surgery looking not so much like a victim of severe burns as, well, Nigel Havers. Verisimilitude may have been all right for the rest of the cast, many of whom looked horribly disfigured, but not for Nige.

His latest series, *The Good Guys*, is even dafter. Two men called Guy, one northern and gritty and one southern and floppy-haired (guess which one Nigel plays), lose their jobs, and instead of sitting around watching *Going For Gold* like everyone else, become involved in a series of wacky adventures. Pitched at a level marginally less credible than *Danger Mouse*, these involve a number of dodgy guest stars overacting shockingly, and all manner of hilarious misunderstandings based on the fact that both main characters are called Guy and, er, that's it. It's quite terrifyingly inane.

LWT, needless to say, is not too bothered about this. Havers is such a surefire ratings-puller that his various drama series for the station are now known generically as the "Nigel Havers strand". (Not for nothing are the floppy-haired one's programmes always interspersed with shampoo ads.)

For the discerning viewer, though, Friday nights are looking even bleaker than before. Compared with *The Good Guys*, even *International Darts from Droitwich* seems an attractive proposition. When Nigel Havers gets a series on to television purely because he has an urgent desire to work with Keith Barron, civilisation is surely on the brink. Dustin Hoffman must be green with envy.

'Couch Potato'

I-BSkyB

In case Uncle Rupert did not buy me one for Christmas — and he hasn't — I invested in Sky with the movie channels.

It is like trading up from a four-room house to a mansion. A window into Europe.

There is all the sport anyone could want, though I don't want all that much. But the 24-hour news channel is ideal for people like me who can't sleep (guilty conscience).

JUDGE PICKLES
The Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: Dave Ray.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

MEDIA NEWS

JOHN BIRT, the BBC's director general-designate, is behaving with customary graciousness to the man he deposed, Michael Checkland.

All the talk at Corporation Street since the new year has been of Birt's Christmas party at Broadcasting House, where he introduced John Major to every BBC executive (including even Janet Street-Porter) — *except* Michael Checkland.

The hapless outgoing DG was left standing alone in a corner, looking utterly forlorn.

THE RECENT television franchise award to Westcountry TV led by the saintly Stephen Redfarn has upset all sorts of people — not least, it would seem, John Major.

In a letter last November to fellow MP Anthony Steen, the Prime Minister, like Thatch, seems to concede that the cackhanded highest bidder method of doling out licences was indeed wrong.

In fact, if the Independent Television Commission had done its due-diligence more thoroughly, it might have discovered a bit about Robin Edwards, one of the Westcountry directors.

Edwards used to run something called Wyvern Television. It crashed just before the franchise award owing more than £1.5 million, much of it to cameramen, directors and producers.

One punter who was owed £4,000 threatened Edwards with informing the ITC about his colourful antics. Edwards then carefully orchestrated a story in *TV Weekly* which said he was withdrawing as a director of Westcountry. Surprise surprise, after the franchise was awarded Edwards popped up again as a non-executive director of the company. And what about the "fit and proper" criteria for awarding a franchise? Again it appears the ITC has failed.

THERE was some puzzlement shortly before Christmas when the tiresome conjuror Paul Daniels wrote a long and furious article for the *Daily Mail* condemning the BBC for allowing foul-mouthed "alternative" comedians and similar ne'er-do-wells on to its screens.

As the recipient of huge BBC fees, Daniels is hardly in a position to grumble about the corporation. So why did he bite the hand that fed him?

All has now been revealed. His complaint about alternative comedians was a reference to Gerry "Gobshite" Sadowitz, who has just begun a new series on BBC2. Sadowitz's comedy may not be to everyone's taste, but his magic skills — which are to the fore in the series — have obviously got Daniels worried. Hence the fury.

LIBEL NEWS

POLICE constable P. O'Leary of the Metropolitan police has resorted to the firm of Russell Jones & Walker "to restore his good name and reputation" after a barrister's advice to the Crown Prosecution Service referred to him as "an idiot".

The firm has written to the barrister, Michael Logsdon, asking him to apologise for having used "somewhat intemperate language" to describe a statement made by PC O'Leary in a drugs case. Logsdon pointed out that what PC O'Leary had described "as an interview is not in fact an interview but he's an idiot for calling it that".

According to O'Leary's solicitors, Logsdon's remark "has reached the eyes and ears of the majority of persons employed at Wembley Police Station, both civilian staff and police officers. We are instructed that Mr O'Leary has been greatly embarrassed and ridiculed by comments such as 'here comes the resident idiot' and 'what's it like to be an official idiot' and so on."

Logsdon's reply points out that his advice was privileged and that his description of PC O'Leary as an idiot was confined to the specific circumstances of the mistake he made in his statement and "in no way was it intended as a general description".

NEWSPAPERS in Israel are subject to strict censorship on the grounds of national security, but the system is frequently abused in the interests of political expediency.

The newspaper *Davar*, for example, has been looking into allegations made by former Israeli intelligence officer Ari Ben Menashe that the Shamir government was secretly engaged in arms deals with Iran and eastern Europe, and that the late Robert Maxwell was a conduit for arms deals between Israel and the former eastern block.

Ben Menashe specifically alleges he was a member of a secret committee chaired by Shamir and that he reported directly to him from time to time. In checking out the allegations, *Davar* has found, by and large, that Ben Menashe has been accurate.

Davar wants to publish its findings because they show what Shamir and elements within his Likud party have been up to. In accordance with the law, the articles have been submitted to the censor. On no fewer than three occasions they have been rejected, with all references to security, Robert Maxwell and the eastern block deleted.

O.B.N.

As I ploughed up and down the swimming pool — my heart thumping to the beat of Phil Collins blasting over the stereo system — I couldn't help gasping at the extraordinary fitness of our future Queen.

While I barely managed three lengths of the 18-metre pool at Sandringham's nearest health centre, the Princess of Wales takes 30 in her shapely stride. At least, I thought, the Duchess of York is like the rest of us — making the odd concession to Callanetics but content to tuck into the Christmas turkey without guilt...

EMMA WILKINS
Daily Mail

Submitted by John W. Dixon.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

THE LPO's music *direktor*, Herr Frankly Worse-Than-Most, put in charge by the LPO's managing director, John Willen, is proving even more disastrous than imagined. Not content with messing around with the orchestra, he's compounded matters by tampering with the once great LPO Choir.

He wants the choir to be more "continental" — whatever that means; it's a big place, the Continent. Perhaps Worse-than-Most can identify a great "continental choir" to compete with the long-established glories of the British choral tradition which goes back almost as far as intolerance in Vienna.

As a direct consequence of his unpleasantness, many of the best singers have quit and the outlook is bleak. It's all a long way from last summer when Tennstedt's LPO concerts were acclaimed on all sides.

Last summer Worse-than-Most sacked Richard Cooke, the revered chorus master, and replaced him with an ex-King's College man scarcely steeped in continental practices. Now he makes sure the LPO Choir is never used.

He was picked because if the LPO were to be given a South Bank residency Willen needed a music director. All the big names declined, so he turned to the least obvious and picked Welser-Most, hoping to be able to control him. No chance.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

HACKWATCH No 13: Jaci Stephen

IT WAS exactly a year ago, after an abrupt departure from the London *Evening Standard*, that the small but perfectly formed TV critic Jaci Stephen took refuge at the *New Statesman*.

Her arrival went unnoticed by everyone except the *Staggers*'s subscribers until the end of November, when the mag's editor asked readers to vote on whether she should be sacked.

National newspapers — the *Telegraph*, *Times*, *Independent* — immediately rallied to her defence. But they, like most people in Britain, were not regular readers of the *Statesman*. For the benefit of anyone who wondered what the fuss was about, here is a digest of the pocket-Glenda's journalism from the past year.

18 January: "Jaci Stephen's New TV Column," the front cover promises. Inside, Jaci starts as she means to go on: "There are three things of which I am entirely certain in life: (1) I will never work for the *Sun*; (2) I will never want to go to bed with Gazza; and (3) I will go to bed with Gazza long before I so much as admire the duvet cover of Eric Bristow."

22 February: Hits her stride. "Have you noticed how television detectives don't have sex any more?"

1 March: Wonders what happened to "the gorgeous Barry Evans", who appeared in the original series of *Doctor In The House*. "Now there's a man whose scalpel I wouldn't mind holding."

15 March: Lists the American men after whom she lusts: "The whole cast of *LA Law*... Robert de Niro, Robert Redford, Bill Murray..."

5 April: Jaci is distressed by the expensive wedding of *LA Law*'s Harry Hamlin. "And to think he could have had me for a tenner." Consoles herself by drooling over the "pretty spectacular" body of Tom Jones on BBC1. To stop staring at his crotch is, "in my case, as difficult as trying to pull a rampant carnivore away from a well-stocked butcher's window."

26 April: "There's so much sex on TV at the moment," an excited Jaci observes.

31 May: Complains that most politicians are "middle-aged men long past their screw-by date."

7 June: "There is not enough sex on television," Jaci opines, apparently contradicting her own recent pronouncement. "I have yet to witness anything remotely approaching a good, realistic bonk... And we certainly never see evidence of the fact that most women have to resort to cannibalism before a man is satisfied with a blow-job." Oh, and British actors aren't sexy enough. "At present, only Clive Owen (Central TV's *Chancer*) registers anything at all on the bonkability scale."

26 July: "There really is more to sex than the missionary position," Jaci writes, rebuking ITV for not drawing attention to this fact.

2 August: Jaci attends the BBC's launch party for its autumn schedule, attended by "a high number of gorgeous, intelligent and witty men... all the decent men have usually been snatched up by female staff from BBC Press and Publicity before they ever reach the rest of us."

9 August: Condemns the ITV series *Sex Now* for "suggesting that what makes a man good in bed is his ability to be loving and affectionate". What makes a man good in bed, according to Jaci, "is his realisation that a clitoris is not something you study in nature class..."

16 August: Raves yet again about Harry Hamlin, the "beautiful hunk" from *LA Law*, and

the equally "beautiful" Clive Owen of *Chancer*. Clive will not give interviews, she has heard, "because female interviewers always throw themselves at him."

30 August: To Edinburgh for the TV festival — where Jaci encounters "the divine Clive Owen, the star of Central TV's *Chancer*", looking like "a stunning tower of sex quietly smouldering in his raincoat". Alas, she reports, "my entreaties along the lines of 'Fancy a beer later and I suppose a legover's out of the question?' went unanswered." Mortified, she disappears from the *Staggers* for a lengthy summer break.

11 October: Back from hols, Jaci is now living in Soho. "I have decided not to offer my sexual services to passing trade, as I just couldn't perform on dirty sheets, and the nearest launderette is half a mile away."

18 October: Attends a party. "In the Ladies, most of the ladies were bemoaning their lack of cleavage. Standing around with arms crossed, in a desperate bid to make mountains out of molehills, we gazed enviously at the few whose peaks you'd have trouble scaling even with ropes..."

25 October: Attends another party. "The opposite of penis envy is penis adulation, and this I experienced with enormous zest when I bumped into the divine John Alderton at London Weekend Television's party... I didn't actually see anything, you understand, but I'm sure I would have adulated in a big way if I had. Male organs are generally the main topic of conversation among the girlies at LWT, and this night was no exception."

15 November: "I am a woman who calls a penis a penis," Jaci observes, unnecessarily.

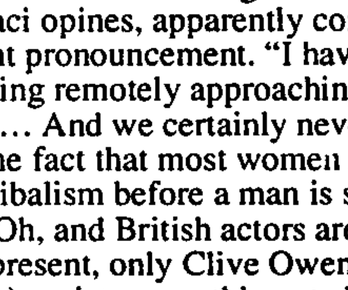
22 November: After being flooded with complaints about Jaci's "smutty inanities", editor Steve Platt announces that her fate will be decided by a readers' poll.

29 November: The hackette hits back. Jaci boasts that her column is both extremely funny and sexually exciting.

6 December: "I must apologise to my readers for a mistake made in my column two weeks ago. The French phrase for blow-job is not *une pipe* but *faire une pipe*."

20 & 27 December (double issue): The votes are in but the result is "too close to call", Platt reports. So he has decided to let Jaci stay. He believes her journalism is "as refreshing as a plunge in a mountain pool".

Thus encouraged, Jaci awards her prizes for television in 1991. Best drama series: *The Men's Room* ("lots of nooky"). Worst drama series: *Trainer* ("it was not until roughly nine weeks into the series that the character of Mike Hardy... showed any evidence that he had a penis at all"). Best TV chef: Anton Mosimann ("this man has only to talk about slicing a mushroom to make you want to take your clothes off"). Best actor is, of course, Clive Owen of Central TV's *Chancer*. "This man is not only a great actor, he is sex as far as the eye can see. Fortunately, being only five feet tall, I don't have to look more than halfway up to get the general effect." Refreshing, eh?



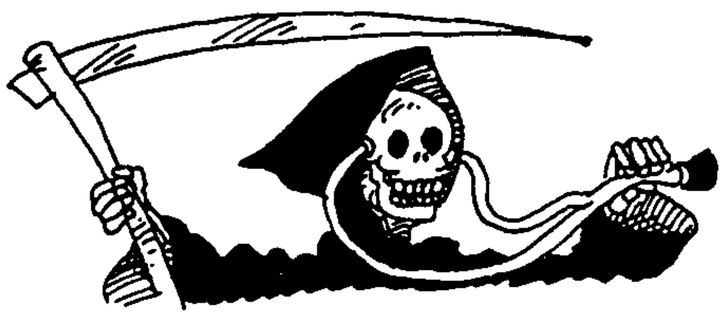
LUVVIES

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
I have three: my son, who was conceived at Stratford-upon-Avon. My boyfriend, who was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, and William Shakespeare, who was the inspiration for both the above events.

KATE O'MARA
Weekend Guardian

Submitted by G.H. Wilson.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 for contributions.



DOING THE ROUNDS

IT'S AN unhappy new year all round for those working in Health Secretary William Waldegrave's beleaguered NHS. The low spots include:

● **King's Lynn**, where Willie Palmer, personnel manager at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, is having trouble recruiting volunteers to attend cardiac arrests at the adjacent private hospital, The Sandringham.

Under present arrangements, any private fibrillation is ferried round to the casualty department by ambulance. This takes at least 15 minutes and the results have not been favourable. Last September, Mr Palmer tried to bribe junior doctors by offering to donate £2,500 a year to the doctors' mess if the NHS crash team would agree to extend its services "next door". The offer was declined, and subsequently withdrawn when he realized that many of the doctors weren't insured to attend to private patients.

The rumour is that Mr Palmer now hopes to make it a contractual necessity for junior doctors to take out insurance for private emergencies when the hospital assumes trust status in April.

● In **Bloomsbury**, where junior doctor Chris Johnstone won the right to sue his health authority for subjecting him to a particularly onerous obstetrics job, little progress has been made on cutting doctors' hours.

Johnstone had taken his decision after falling asleep at the wheel: he used a portable EEG machine to measure his cerebral activity during a 48 hour shift... and found that he was registering sleep waves while sewing women up after labour.

Despite his high court victory, the job remained the same and the doctor who followed him spent time in intensive care after a paracetamol overdose.

● In **Taunton**, where a fire destroyed doctors' accommodation at Musgrove Park Hospital, it was found that the building lacked a fire alarm. The managerial response was clear: "You can always shout for help."

Nearby Winford Orthopaedic Hospital in **Bristol**, meanwhile, boasts the worst doctors' accommodation in Britain: a family of four sharing one bedroom with black-mould on the walls.

● In **Tooting**, Roger Evans, unit manager at St George's Hospital, received a Christmas bonus for closing down Bishop ward. This was after St George's was unable to collect half the income for its first year's trading because inaccurate records failed to locate half the fund-holding GPs. Nice work, Roger!

● In **Suffolk**, Brian Webster, manager of Ipswich Hospital, declined an invitation to speak to junior doctors about "the advantages of becoming a trust" because "they are only here for six months and it isn't worth my while".

When he finally deigned to appear before the mess, he refused to answer questions and left in a strop, claiming junior doctors were becoming too confrontational. Meanwhile Bryan Carpenter, personnel director of the **South Devon** Healthcare Trust, responded to an inquiry from BMA industrial relations officer Helen Davies as to why he was charging hospital-ridden doctors 30p a unit plus a 20 percent handling charge for all phone calls by writing: "I do not expect to be addressed in such a condescending manner by a full time official of a Trade Union. Should you persist with this tone, you will find that I will respond, but not in the way that you might have hoped."

● With the book-balancing season fast approaching in **Bath**, the Royal United Hospital is considering extending its radiotherapy facilities to the sick pets of rich owners. And **Bradford** Royal Infirmary recently came up with a novel money-saver: it ran out of needles. Meanwhile, doctors at the penny-pinching **Bristol** Royal Infirmary were forced to go to the small claims court to seek remuneration for extra-contractual work. The work, which involved consenting patients for operations and checking their well-being afterwards, was deemed to be "non-essential" by the trust's solicitor. Fortunately, good sense prevailed and the doctors won their exorbitant claim of £2.38 an hour.

● In **London**, Guy's hospital, ever keen to attract custom, has invested in a fab new laser to zap gall bladders at the bargain basement price of £90,000. Needless to say, all the surgeons prefer to use the trusty old diathermy and the laser has been swiftly relegated to the cupboard under the sink.

"We've got mistrust status"

● Dr Stephen Horsley FRCP, FFCM, MB, BSc, chairman of the **North-West** Regional Task Force, has sent a circular to colleagues with ideas about implementing "the new deal" for junior doctors. To reduce hours in hard-pressed posts to 83 per week, he has received bids for more than a hundred extra senior house officers in his region alone. But money is scarce and extra SHOs will only be employed in "exceptional circumstances". Instead, changes in work practices will be introduced which will "reduce the amount of juniors' work between 9 and 5" and "reduce the number of doctors in hospital overnight, with obvious implications for service provision".

Forcing the same number of doctors to do the same amount of work in less time will be even more dangerous than the present system. This so angered junior doctors at the Victoria Hospital in **Blackpool** that they picketed the Tory party conference. They received no support from the BMA but did get a few words of encouragement from Peter Bottomley MP, who referred to them as "pig ignorant". The deal itself can only be saved in the unlikely event of consultants agreeing to make up the shortfall in manpower. Meanwhile, a year after the deal was announced, surgical house officers in **Newcastle** are working 150 hours a week to cover for colleagues on holiday. A happy new year indeed.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'

ONE OF THE most valuable bodies in the thickets of Whitehall is the amiably toothless deregulation unit at the Department of Trade and Industry. It tries to erase superfluous and oppressive rules and regulations and is much hated by civil servants.

Its reforming team has been told to keep out of any deregulatory ideas that might offend the European Commission and satisfy itself with useful little tinkerings such as reducing the number of compulsory sheep dips each year and simplifying the number of forms to be filled in for exquisitely silly "co-responsibility levies".

Now, however, its sponsoring ministers, the drip Peter Lilley and his sidekick John Redwood, have given the unit a nudge and a wink to take on some of M. Delors' madder regulatory wheezes.

As the entire criminal conspiracy of "farming" depends on elaborate structures of regulation and subsidy what can the DTI team be thinking of? Luckily the courageous J. Selwyn Gummer has expressed the view the deregulators will not get anywhere near his MAFF.

ON NEW Year's Day the preposterous Egg (Pasteurisation) Regulation 1963 was swept away to be replaced by the even more oppressive Egg Products Regulations, pursuant to EC directive 89/437.

Egg farmers will not now be allowed to trade eggs separated on their own premises. Melange, as it is called, is an important element for many egg farmers so it is good to see the EC suppressing this market. And selling liquid or frozen eggs to processors is also banned.

A further directive, EC 89/397, bans exports of British melange eggs and all seconds, ie non grade A. Grades B and C are ruled unacceptable. Richard North, a student of Euro-madness predicts the new Egg Product Regulations will raise prices for consumer and lower them for producers.

Bakeries and processors will opt for dried or pasteurised eggs killing off most of the small egg producers — which is what Mrs Edwina Currie hoped to do before the public rumpus brought her down. Throughout the country millions of people will sell/ buy/ boil/ scramble/ bake/ fry eggs that have not been approved by the EC authorities and a blameless and efficient market will be rendered sub-criminal.

THE National Union of the Conservative Party is a landscape inhabited by creepy-crawlies of the worst type who hang around the Tory bigwigs in the reasonable expectation of gongs. No genuine political idea or principle has ever been articulated by its office bearers, the talk being only of the excellence of each minister and the prospects for a quick game of golf.

But now all the conventions have been broken.

Sir Basil Feldman, who has the form to be just another empty-headed suit from Arslikhan, has been masterminding the campaign to break the objections to consenting adults committing acts of grocery with one another on Sundays.

No doubt the forces for trading liberalisation could not have won their victory without the mendacity and greed of the big retailers and the blind eye of Home Office law 'n' order minister Angela Rumbold; but full marks to Sir Basil for his tenacity. His career in the National Union must now be short lived. When political views break out on the "voluntary" side of the party — let alone liberal views — it just isn't golf.

HUNT NEWS

THE HUNT saboteurs' fraternity has been scoring further legal victories against hunt members and regional police forces.

Last October, Thames Valley police were ordered to pay a total of £12,000 damages to a group of Oxford saboteurs for wrongful arrest and unlawful imprisonment (see *Eye* 782), and at the end of November settled another case brought by Oxford saboteurs, this time coughing up £22,000 in damages and approximately £30,000 in legal costs. This was well-advised, since the previous case, which the police lost at trial, cost them £120,000 in damages and legal fees.

Hunt members, meanwhile, continue to be prosecuted for their involvement in acts of violence. Nigel Trevithick-Wood has received a six-month suspended sentence for affray over what the prosecution elegantly described as his "sheer wilful and mindless thuggery".

He had been ordered by his foxhunting wife, who leads the Old Surrey and Burstow Hunt, to chase away saboteurs. Interpreting her instructions a little too liberally, he oversaw the beating and whipping by two accomplices of a saboteur, who was later found wandering round a field, dazed and bloodied.

'Reynard'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

STAFFORDSHIRE

HOW does Staffordshire council repay the victims of its brutal and now disgraced social services "experiments"? With miserly Christmas boxes of just £1,500 each.

That is the sum paid out so far to those on the receiving end of the Labour-run county council's notorious pin-down method of controlling children in care.

Sadly the most infamous case — that of the barefoot waif who escaped in the snow and ran home to her abusing father (*Eyes passim*), got nothing. She even fails to appear on the "official" list of victims (and failed to feature in the Levy pin-down report) because council officials doctored her records and "lost" vital personal documents. Fortunately the girl can remember almost all the details of her incarceration.

While concerned locals fight her case for compensation, county council officials have announced that "unavoidable" cuts of about £7 million must be made from next year's town hall budget. Although education is most at risk — why should anyone in Stoke need to be able to read or write? — social services will lose just under £1 million from its planned spending.

The official excuse is that Whitehall has deliberately given Staffs a paltry spending assessment target. More likely is the theory that Staffs has shown itself incapable of handling funds responsibly and that the less money it receives, the less it can waste.

However, if one adds up the different amounts the pin-down debacle has cost the Potteries folk — £600,000 for social workers who took early retirement; £360,000 on pointless wages for officers suspended on full pay; loss of business confidence in the authority due to pin-down; extra insurance premiums thanks to the "massive" payments made to the pin-down victims — it soon reaches the £1 million-odd the council must cut from its social services budget.

SHEFFIELD

THE BLADES are out in Sheffield, Britain's steal (*sic*) city, following the council's spirited Christmas message that losses for hosting last summer's World Student Games totalled £10 million and rising.

The council's Labour leaders claim the scale of the deficit has shocked them. *Eye* readers will not be shocked: our predictions a year ago were disarmingly correct when we forecast that the games would eventually cost the hard-up Sheffield charge-payers £25 million.

The council, organisers of the games, vowed to break even. Yet now its final calculations show that on top of the lost £10 million operating costs, interest charges will total about £15 million — a combined deficit not a million miles from £25 million!

Although some shortfall was inevitable due to the recession, the Gulf War's effect on travel and the insignificance of the event itself, scrutiny of the accounts continue to suggest that municipal incompetence heightened the disaster. For instance, nearly half the people who attended events were given free tickets.

Worse still, a report from council treasurer Malcolm Newman warning of huge losses only a few weeks before the games began, was toned down before it was made public. Even more remarkably, a second report from the district auditor, correctly predicting operating losses of £10.3 million, was held back from councillors because officers decided his calculations were wrong!

Belatedly, council leader Clive Betts, would-be MP for Sheffield Attercliffe and trainee Labour sports minister, has launched a pointless internal investigation into the monumentous cock-ups surrounding the games' organisation. Tory calls for a public inquiry have so far been ignored.

In their desperation to find a scapegoat for their own inadequacies, town hall leaders have picked on a "hostile press" as the culprit. In fact the local media and much of the national press was strangely sympathetic to the games — despite the mounting evidence. Only *Private Eye* and *World In Action* ignored the PR hype.

BENT

LABOUR'S blind determination to show solidarity with the world's oppressed has come unstuck in barmy Bent, Britain's most ethnically-sound borough.

Following the rally at Wembley Stadium in honour of Nelson Mandela in April 1990, Bent council's then ruling Labour leadership conferred the freedom of the borough on its spiritual hero.

At the meeting convened to approve the honour, Labour was three members short of the required two-thirds majority and the vote was lost. No problem. Once a few more Labourites had wandered in and a contingent of Liberals had been rounded up, Mayor Len Williams reconvened the meeting, re-put the motion and obtained the necessary votes.

This brazen abuse of the democratic principle greatly distressed Bent's Tories who went to the high court and obtained an injunction to prevent Nelson Mandela freely walking the streets of Neasden on the grounds that the vote had been taken illegally.

Labour group leader Dorman Long and Blind Len Williams (the mayor, not the blues singer) now have to cough up £6,497 between them in costs. Comradely socialism, as we may find out later this year, doesn't come cheap.

OLDHAM

LABOUR leaders in Britain's bleakest borough, Oldham, have angered locals with a plan to sell off to developers one of the last remaining undeveloped patches of mud at the foot of the Pennines.

Clayton Playing Fields, a few scrubby pitches near land belonging Oldham Athletic Football Club, has been held in "trust" by the council since a local worthy bequeathed the seven-acres to the town in 1962 "for the purposes of playing fields solely".

Two years ago, a consortium of powerful retail interests, InterCity Developers, approached Oldham Council with plans to build a Shopping City on the fields, featuring a Marks and Spencer, a supermarket and obligatory cineplex, bowling alley, fast food restaurants and ice-skating rink. Sadly for locals, no sheep-dip, tripe factory or ferret-baiting pit was proposed.

After much cloth cap wringing and approaches to the Charity Commissioners, Oldham rejected the developers' proposals. Improved offers were again rejected until the council received a writ from four locals, self-styled "beneficiaries of the trust", seeking to overturn Oldham's rejection.

These four worthies claimed that disposal of the site would have produced a "substantial benefit to the Charity in terms of an increased number of pitches and a substantial monetary consideration". (This is thought to be about £7 million — not bad for a trust with no other assets.) And their move worked: Oldham hastily agreed to seek permission from the high court to sell the land.

However, Oldham's dithering in getting a case together has been such that only now, 18 months later, is the documentation ready.

And who are the four worthies whose actions prompted the council's change of heart? Interestingly, three of them are directors of Oldham Athletic. And if the InterCity development goes ahead, a small and seemingly useless patch of ground near the club, currently used as a training pitch, will be worthy £2 million — a more than useful sum given the club's planned refurbishments.

CASTLE POINT

WHO WOULD begrudge councillors from the grim grey mudflats of Canvey Island and its environs, Castle Point, the odd jolly perk? Certainly not Lord Gnome!

It is good to report, then, that their pitifully dull existences have been enlivened of late thanks to the generosity of others. There were the various dinners hosted by representatives of British Gas; and the granting of seats in a private box at the local football club, also courtesy of British Gas. Then there was the all-expenses paid trip on the Orient Express: not the football special to Leyton, but the elegant continental train — also courtesy of British Gas.

Coincidentally, at a recent meeting of Castle Point's housing committee there was much discussion over the allocation of a contract to install and maintain... gas central heating in the borough's council houses.

After a short debate, standing orders — which require councillors to accept the *lowest* tender offered — were suspended. This enabled British Gas to tender for the work even though its bid was £25,000 *higher* than the lowest bid. That's the beauty of gas.

BIRMINGHAM

POOR Gerry Moore, the councillor in charge of the city's children's homes. Not only do his charges continually try to escape from his caring homes, but Moore also has to contend with appallingly disloyal staff who run to the *Eye* each time it happens.

Now he is facing completely unreasonable calls for his resignation — just because he has failed to record any of the dozens of visits he has made to his troubled staff and their charges.

Social services records seem to indicate that Moore has not visited a single home in more than a year. If that were true, it would be an appalling indictment of the man who has presided over a series of escapes and nasty incidents inflicted on youngsters in care by some of his staff. Luckily we know it cannot be true — because Councillor Moore has said as much. His explanation is straightforward: all the visits were carried out secretly. So secretly, in fact, he cannot say which homes he visited.

Letters

Error

Sir,

The writer of your first article in your last issue should be unemployed. He would then realise what rubbish he wrote. It is not correct that the unemployed home owner gets not a penny benefit towards the mortgage interest until he or she has been out of work for 16 weeks. Rather, half of mortgage interest is paid for the first 16 weeks and the full amount thereafter, including interest rolled up in the 16-week period.

Again, contrary to what the article said, building societies never suggested that this measure would lead to a huge rise in evictions and repossessions. The original government intention (to pay no income support at all for mortgage interest in the first six months of a claim) may well have had the effect, but the Government responded to representations and watered down its original proposal.

Lenders did certainly not laugh when the then Minister for Social Security said that there was no reason for a large rise in repossessions. He was quoting from a press statement issued by The Building Societies Association which said: "There is no reason to expect that people will lose their homes as a result of this measure."

Yours faithfully,
M.J. BOLEAT,

Director-General, Council of Mortgage Lenders, London W1.

Plug hole

Sir,

Far from being a "Sky-plug masquerading as a news item", my article which you featured in I-BSkyB (EYE *784) was a legitimate story about the rising sales of satellite dishes, and was also reported in those notoriously pro-Murdoch papers the* INDEPENDENT *and the* DAILY TELEGRAPH. *And another thing: it appeared in the* NEWS OF THE WORLD, *not the* SUN. *Sky-plugging in that organ has always been (and will soon be again) the exclusive province of Mr Garry "Gissa free dish" Bushell.*

Yours deeply hurt,
CHRISTOPHER CATCHPOLE,

News of the World, London E1.

Lookalike

Clarke

Dekko

Sir,

Have your readers noticed the similarity between Dekko, the slob whose odious behaviour wrecks the band, THE COMMITMENTS *in the film of that name and Kenneth Clarke, the Education Secretary, whose odious behaviour is currently wrecking state education? Are the two related? I think we should be told.*

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HOPWOOD,

Ratby, Leicester.

> I hope you will understand, however, that even with the best run production lines problems are bound to occur from time to time – some, if not all, arising from incidents for which British Rail is directly to blame. Suicides; vandalism; Acts of God, Herons colliding with overhead power cables (wires down at Hitchin); manufacturers failing to meet delivery dates with new trains; new unexpected statutory health regulations, etc being but examples of these.
>
> *Letter to a passenger from BR Customer Services*

Smear campaign

Sir,

Your report on the use of the fuel Orimulsion (the correct spelling) at Richborough Power Station belies the facts resulting from a report by the government Inspectorate for Pollution. The report did more than give PowerGen a licence to "operate within the law" but, further, revealed that what your correspondent described as "soot raining down" was not caused by Orimulsion but by oil particles built up over a considerable period of time and loosened by the vibrations of the plant. These deposits existed before the power station was privatised and, of course, before trials of the Venezuelan fuel, an emulsion of bitumen and water.

The current campaign to label Orimulsion as the "dirtiest fuel in the world" is nothing more than a party political ploy by the opposition energy spokesman, Frank Dobson, eager to create a pre-election energy policy at the expense of emerging facts.

Fact number one is that similar pollution was reported before the use of Orimulsion. Fact number two is that there are sound environmental advantages to its use with proof that it is cleaner than oil if burning is kept below the maximum capacity (the output has been cut from 350 to 300 megawatts). Fact number three is that the use of Orimulsion could cut fuel bills by up to 50 percent. Fact number four is that emissions have vastly improved since the use of Orimulsion. I live in view of Richborough Power Station and am unaware of this "black sticky mess over the Garden of England", even on a warm, sunny day.

I am NOT employed by PowerGen.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT EDWARDS,

Ramsgate, Kent.

Of Courcy

Sir,

Your issue 784 carried a damaging and defamatory allegation about me. In your HOW THEY ARE RELATED *column on page six you stated that the* EVENING STANDARD *had carried a "gushing" profile by me of Anthony and Rosie Cheetham. This was followed by the phrase: "FACT: Anne de Courcy is Rosie Cheetham's sister". It should have started: "FICTION".*

I am not Mrs Cheetham's sister and neither of us is related in any way to the other. Before I interviewed them I had never met or had any kind of contact with the Cheethams.

Presumably your implication that I used my position on the STANDARD *to puff a family member stems from the fact — not mentioned in your original item — that Mrs Cheetham's maiden name was de Courcy. When I began to write I was a widow and my own name was de Courcy — my late husband Michael de Courcy was, I believe, distantly related to Mrs Cheetham's father. By the time I remarried I had established my byline and I naturally did not change it. I have had no contact with the de Courcy family since.*

Yours faithfully,
ANNE DE COURCY,

Evening Standard, London W8.

● ***Er... sorry. Ed.***

Invaluable

Sir,

I have been rocked to my foundations to read Bookworm (783) state that "Weidenfeld & Nicolson were and are a hardback house".

Would he now like to purchase my three Weidenfeld paperbacks (WP's) for their scarcity value? All were published in the last two years.

Yours faithfully,
N.P. WARREN,

Greenford, Middx.

Shop lifting

Sir,

My wife and I own a small ladies fashion shop. Along with most other small businesses we are struggling to survive this recession that the Government told us was over last summer (shurely some mistake?)

We have a business account for the shop at the NatWest Bank. Recently my wife paid a bill for £24 by cheque. The bank stopped it as we had (without knowing) just exceeded our overdraft facility. They then charged us £35 for the privilege. These charges were added to our overdraft and have interest charged on them. I advised them that they couldn't do this as they had already told us we couldn't exceed our overdraft facility. Apparently we can if it's money owed to them.

I have a sneaky suspicion I know how NatWest are going to get back the £155 million they lent Cap'n Bob, the pensioners' friend.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD B.L. SIROT,

Beckenham, Kent.

Lookalike

Windsor

De Cadenet

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed, as I have, the striking resemblance between the soon-to-be-married Lady Helen 'Melons' Windsor and the TV "presenter" Amanda De Cadenet. Could they perhaps be a pair (ha ha)?

Yours,
ENA B. CASH (Mrs),

Sussex.

Country vocal

Sir,

Can John Sheehan, EYE *today, be for real? Or is he some editorial wind-up?*

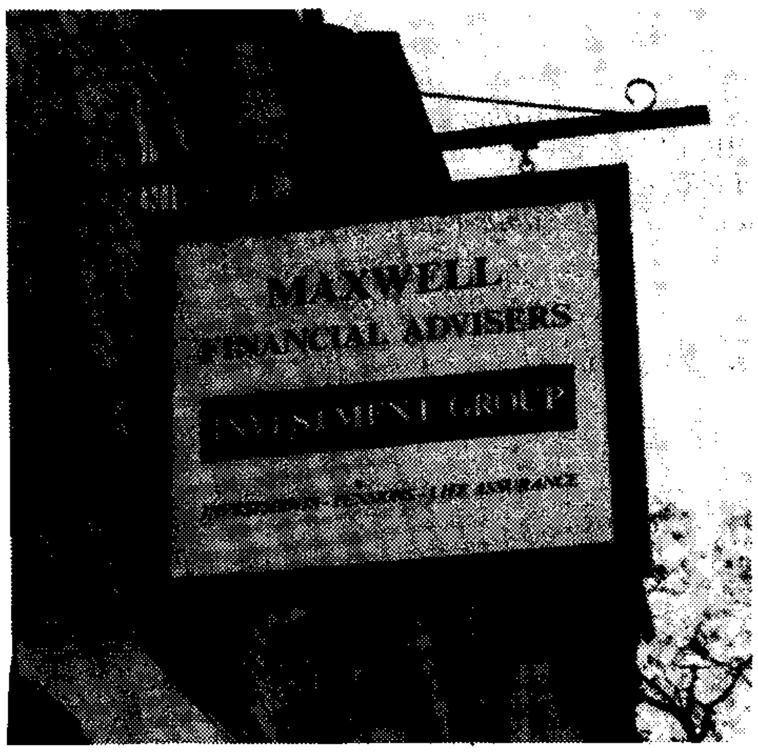
The majority of the country population may well support the Police, but the Hunt? No way.

Tolerated by tenant farmers who have no choice, the Hunt is scorned by all but a tiny, vociferous minority of social climbers and wannabes. I have spent all my life in the country (20 years in farming and at 4th hand Austin, not new Volvo level) and in N. Yorkshire, not S. Africa.

Yours faithfully,
W. BRATLEY,

Malton, Yorks.

I-SPY *Newport, Shropshire*



Submitted by Peter Weedon. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Hunt balls

Sir,

I never thought I'd be moved to write to the EYE, *but reading J.S. Thornton's letter (784) almost made my pen explode in anger.*

Moaning about your "Hunt News" section your correspondent writes of "criminal riff-raff" and tries to convince us that fox hunting is OK because some report in 1951 said so.

Just when I thought I was calming down, I read with dismay the letter from John Sheehan, from which I lift this choice quote "hordes of Urban Spartists who crawl out of their inner-city squats every weekend".

Well, Mr Sheehan, at the last local election I was a Conservative candidate, and I don't live in a squat, and I'd quite happily string you foxhunters up by your balls.

Yours faithfully,
P.D. BUTTON,

Ipswich.

Grunt saboteur

Sir,

I am a regular reader of PRIVATE EYE *and so, according to that wonderful human being John Sheehan (784), being your average inhabitant of a rural area I applaud fox hunting and give my full support to the hunt, doing its oh so important community service, and so do all my friends, acquaintances, etc. I'm sorry to disillusion him: I don't know one person who takes part in or even supports the principle of a hunt.*

I have taken part in many anti-hunt demonstrations. Contrary to opinion I don't live in a squat and I don't take part to cause mayhem but to show people the true barbarism of a fox hunt.

Yours faithfully,
HADYN GRUNT,

Newport, Isle of Wight.

Commitments

Sir,

I was amazed by the two letters (784) criticising your Hunt News column. As usual they try to divert attention away from the depravity of hunting by trying to discredit the antis. John Sheehan seems to think that only country dwellers have a right to judge the morality of bloodsports. Maybe they have a better class of hunt supporter in South Africa, but in the Cotswold village where I spent three horrible years, the huntin' fraternity would have made Eddie Grundy seem like the president of Mensa.

J.S. Thornton calls the sabs "riff-raff". Those of my acquaintance have included a barrister, an engineer, a farmer and many hardworking businessmen and women — hardly crusties! All are committed veggies involved in many aspects of animal welfare. The man who started the Hunt Saboteurs was, if I recall, a chartered surveyor, a profession not usually noted for its anarchist tendencies.

Tally Ho!
VAL GRAHAM,

Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

Bereft

Sir,

I have seen absolutely no reference in your magazine to the recent death of Robert Maxwell. Please could we have SOMETHING?

Yours faithfully,
A. MORTON,

Leeds.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Jimmy Hill: *"Don't sit on the fence Terry, what chance do you think Germany have of getting through?"*
Terry Venables: *"I think it's fifty-fifty."*
BBC1.
(Martin Jones)

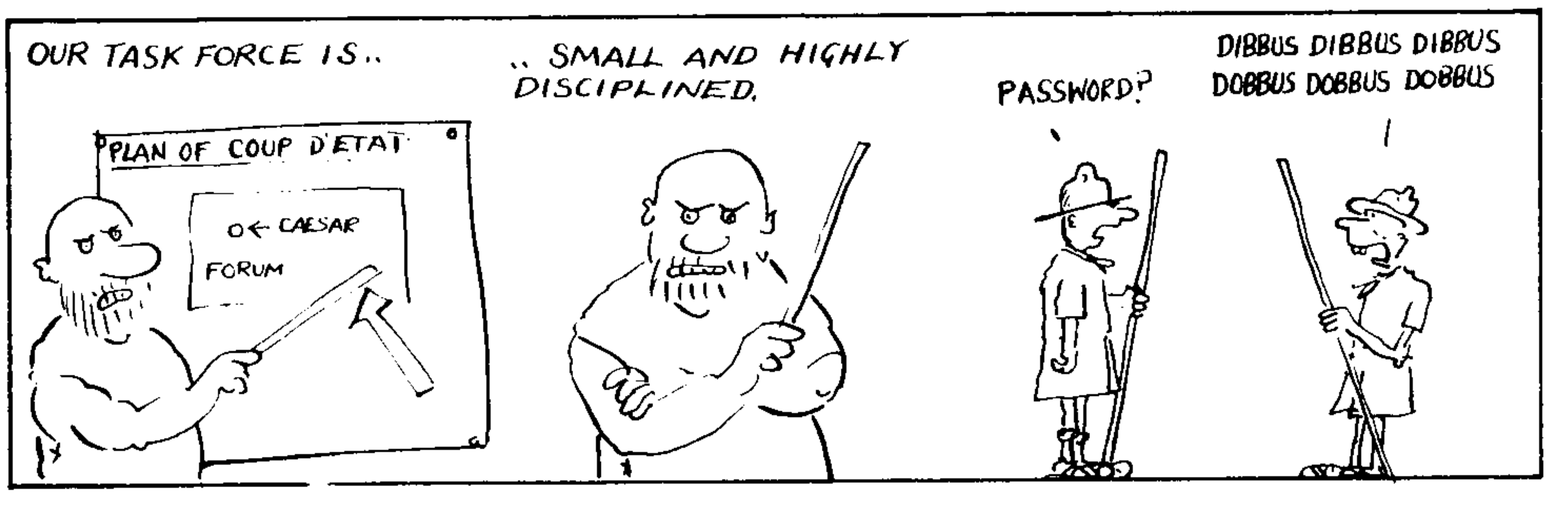
"What is the use of all these countries sending us aid, and then below the table kicking us in the teeth?"
THAI ECONOMIC SPOKESMAN, BBC.
(Michael Grosvenor-Myer)

"There were no heroes out there, they were all heroes!"
CHRIS TURNER, Radio 5.
(Timothy Walters)

"And Lineker scored the equaliser thirteen minutes before the end — talk about a last-minute goal!"
SIMON MAYO, Radio 1.
(Neil Jerome)

"They compare him to Steve Heighway and he's nothing like him, but I can see why — it's because he's a bit different."
KEVIN KEEGAN, ITV.
(Nigel Brown)

HOM SAP BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from **East Timor**

From Our Own Correspondent

IT JUST isn't fair. We soldiers obey orders — the other day we shot 152 Timorese and a New Zealander at the Santa Cruz cemetery here in Dili for the greater good of Indonesia — and then we get the blame.

Indeed, we are more than a little choked at our brave President Soeharto's sacking of our generals Rudy Warouw and Sintong Panjaitan just because of the fuss over a lot of dead Timorese. After all, most of them were Christians and Rudy and Sintong are very good generals.

As that slippery civilian Governor Carrascalao was asked the other day, is Indonesia the biggest Muslim state in the world, or is it? Did Soeharto annex East Timor to the world's biggest Muslim state in 1976, or did he? Can we beat the backsides off the Catholics here in Tim Tim, or can we?

If Soeharto won't let us who are stationed in this Allah-forsaken hellhole sort out these snivelling Christians and their Falintin guerrillas, then the old fool ought to move out in favour of someone with more guts. After all, it is not as though the Soeharto family hasn't made enough money for him to retire quite comfortably.

It's the same story in Aceh in Sumatra and in Irian Jaya: the army is being forced to go softly-softly. All the boys in Battalion 700 believe the army should be able to annihilate anyone who can't show he is 101 per cent Indonesian and who doesn't realise — and no messing — that what we Javanese say in Indonesia goes. Now that our foreign minister Ali Alatas has lost his chance to be head of the United Nations I don't see why we've got to go on pretending to the world that we're boy scouts.

The commander-in-chief has got it right: Try Soetrisno said to the Lemhanas people a few days after the Santa Cruz affair: "These delinquents have to be shot." We shot them for Indonesia's sake and now Rudy and Sintong get the heave-ho! It's enough to make you cry into your nasi goreng.

News is not good from Canberra either. An Aussie colonel I met in Jakarta a fortnight ago said part of the reason Prime Minister Bob Hawke got the push last month was that the Aussies didn't like the way he supported us over Tim Tim. Our other Aussie friend, Gareth Evans, who did so well for us at the Foreign Ministry is also up the creek without a paddle.

But we're all glad here that you Brits are holding the line and that your Douglas Hurd has told Alatas that he didn't mean all those hurtful things the Europeans forced him to say about the Santa Cruz difficulty.

Indeed, the kit you Brits sold us is very good indeed for zapping the Timorese and you're training our people very well. My young chum Hardiwan, who used to be stationed in Soerabaja — he's a major now — is delighted to be studying how to kill Falintil more efficiently at some military college of yours called Shrivenham. Though he's a Catholic he's a good man. He was learning English at some place called Silsoe with young Bambang from Bogor, who's also just started at Shrivenham.

Meanwhile we are all somewhat opposed to the two new so-called generals replacing Rudy and Sintong. Mantiri is a paper-pusher from HQ in Jakarta, and Syafei an unknown from the wrong end of Sumatra. And they're both Christians! If they were real men and soldiers they'd have told Soeharto to stuff the jobs.

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE'S

TRUE STORIES

ILLUMINATED BY BERT KITCHEN

IN COURT for prostitution, Miss Katrina Jones gave the Marylebone magistrate Sir Bryan Robert an address in Falmouth: "I commute to work in London," she said. "It means extra hours, especially as I travel first-class. But that way you meet a better class of person and sometimes you get your first client of the day on the train."

AT HER retirement party in Kleinmond, near Cape Town, Mrs Dalene Cronje, a tea-lady employed by the council for the past 28 years, asked for a "plot in the local graveyard" as her farewell present.

After hearing her recite the names of every town clerk for the previous 30 years, Dr Roche de Jager, the present clerk, said: "Mrs Cronje, in return for the — approximately — 300,000 cups of tea you have made in our name, please accept this stone [removing its cover] and, in addition to the Council's congratulations, may I add the promise that, when the time comes, your name will be carved on it at our expense."

Immediately thereafter, Dr de Jager and Mrs Jane Proof, the present Mayor, helped Mrs Cronje carry the gravestone to a waiting taxi.

TRANSKEI'S Assistant Minister for Sport, Mr Jason Onidek, has called for an enquiry into the management of the Impala Soccer League after the East Blackpool Coastal Waves thrashed Leeds Agricultural 69-0, and Western Transkei beat Port St Johns 92-1.

"The minister suspects that something fishy may be going on, and that some teams may be dropped from the League," said Mr Victor Mbaji, the Minister's spokesman.

ADDRESSING the Highland Retailers Association, Mrs Donald MacCued said: "... and if the unfortunate fugitives from the Battle of Culloden were fleeing from the field today, they would approach Inverness by the new A9 dual carriageway, and the first large building that their sad eyes would see is Co-Op Inshes — the largest retail complex in the Highlands."

QUESTIONED by the National Audit Committee's chairman, Mr James Mozart, Captain Dave England of the Texas National Guard agreed that the Guard had spent $2.9 million on anti-drug activities. These included a 40-strong team of male and female prevention officers who monitored the Rio Bravo's northern banks disguised as cactus plants.

"I AM not in the least upset by the turn-out," said Mr John Sleeman, the chief organiser of the Cambourne Carnival.

"I agree we would have had a larger crowd if our Queen, Michelle Harvey, had not been elsewhere. But although there were no children present, and the floats did not turn up, many people enjoyed the 22-strong Mount Charles Silver Band, followed by Billy, a Shetland pony, and Brian, his owner, on his bike. Then there was Mrs Harvey, Michelle's granny, driving a restored 1902 Nuffield tractor, followed by myself and Mrs Dora Harvey, and a St John's ambulance.

"We collected £43, which will go towards buying fruit for the local hospitals at Christmas."

LED into the dock at Shepstone Court and sentenced to 10 days' imprisonment for drunk and disorderly behaviour, Mr John Rodgers said:

"I failed to say that I was not Mr John White, the accused, but Mr John Rodgers, the witness against him, because I was so surprised at what was happening."

INFORMATION: The Cornishman 18.7.91; The Johannesburg Citizen 2.11.91; Natal Mercury 23.9.91; The Co-Op Magazine, Autumn 1991; Toronto Globe & Mail 4.10.91; West Briton and Royal Cornwall Gazette 24.10.91; Cape Times 1.8.91.

MONITORS: Anon, Ken Walton, Chris Albertyn, Sally Thorne, Brendan J. O'Byrne, Philip Hutchings, H.M. Wright.

Biggest literary riddle of age solved

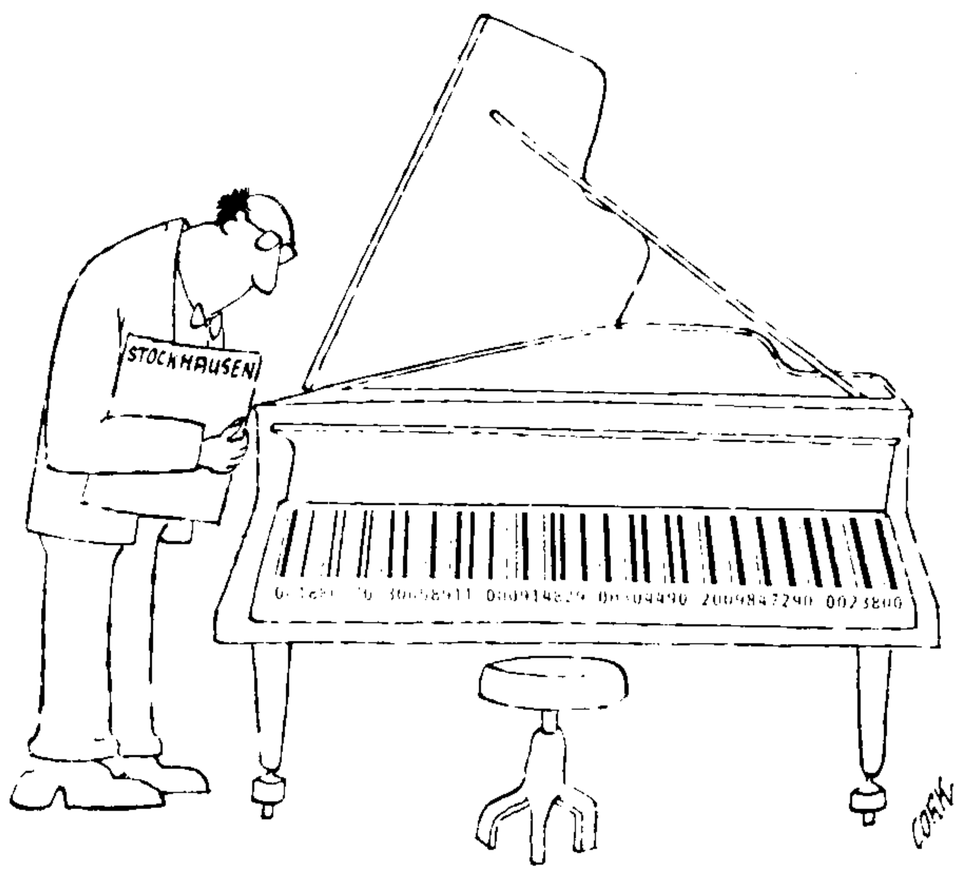
by Our Literary Correspondent **James Dellingpowell**

The identity of the man who inspired the well-known literary character Mr Anthony Powell has at last been established.

For years the literary world has buzzed with speculation as to who could have been the original for the notoriously dull and uninspiring character, who lived in the West Country, writing hundreds of appallingly dreary novels about people he had been at school with.

For a long time it was believed that Powell was based on Evelyn Waugh or Simon Raven.

But now an exclusive article in the *Daily Telegraph* has revealed that "Anthony Powell" was in fact modelled on an obscure Dorset recluse called Sir Herbert Gussett, who died in 1941.



GLENDA SLAGG

The Darling Bud of January!?!

HATS OFF to Melvyn Bragg!? The South Banks Egg-Head who's brought Sunday night sex to our screens!?! OK, so he sounds like the guy in the "Tunes" ad on the telly ("Say Dunes" — remember, Mister?!?). But this Cumbrian Cookie has written a raunchy love romp to set the whole nation's hearts a-bumpin' and a-thumpin'!?! What next?!? The South Bonk Show?!? (Geddit?!)

MELVYN BRAGG?!? Aren't-chasickofhim?!? Not content with showing off on his arty-farty telly show, this adenoidal 'as-been now pours his piping-hot porno into our living rooms?!? If we want the sexual fantasies of a dirty ol' man a-humpin' and a-thumpin' all over the Lake District, Melv, we'll give you a ring?!! Meanwhile, give us a break and clear off back to Cockermouth (geddit?!) or wherever it is you come from?!??!

SO, Jerry Hall has had a baby!?! Who hasn't?! But spare a thought for poor little Georgia May Ayeesha Jagger!?! What a mouthful!?! Are you too snooty now, Mr and Mrs So-Called Rolling Stones, to give the littl'un a real name?!? What's wrong with good old English names like Sharon or Tracy or Barbara Amiel?!?

MICK JAGGER?!? You should be ashamed of yourself at your age?!? I say clear off Mr Dirty Mac or Dirty Mic (geddit?!) and go back to Cumbria with Melvyn Bragg?!?!

Here they are — Glenda's Desert Island Dishes?!?

DIRK BOGARDE. OK, so you're a friend of Dorothy. Why not be a friend of Glenda's?!?

BAMBER GASCOIGNE. I'm your Starter for Ten?!? (Geddit?!?)

LONNIE DONEGAN. Remember him?! How about being my "Midnight Special"?!?

Byeeeeeee!?!

Yes! It's Roger Freeman MP Rhyming Slang!

Typist Class	**Silly arse**
Network South	**Foot in mouth**
Freeman, Roger	**Bodger**
Inter-City	**Silly twitty**
Cheap and cheerful	**Now looks tearful**
Transport	**Second thought**
Express	**Mess**
Rifkind	**Should be binned**
Wrong kind of snow	**Time to go**
Leaves on track	**Give him the sack**

(That's enough Roger Freeman. Ed.)

THAT BR PRIVATISATION WHITE PAPER IN FULL

1. We are going to privatise British Rail.

2. We have no idea how.

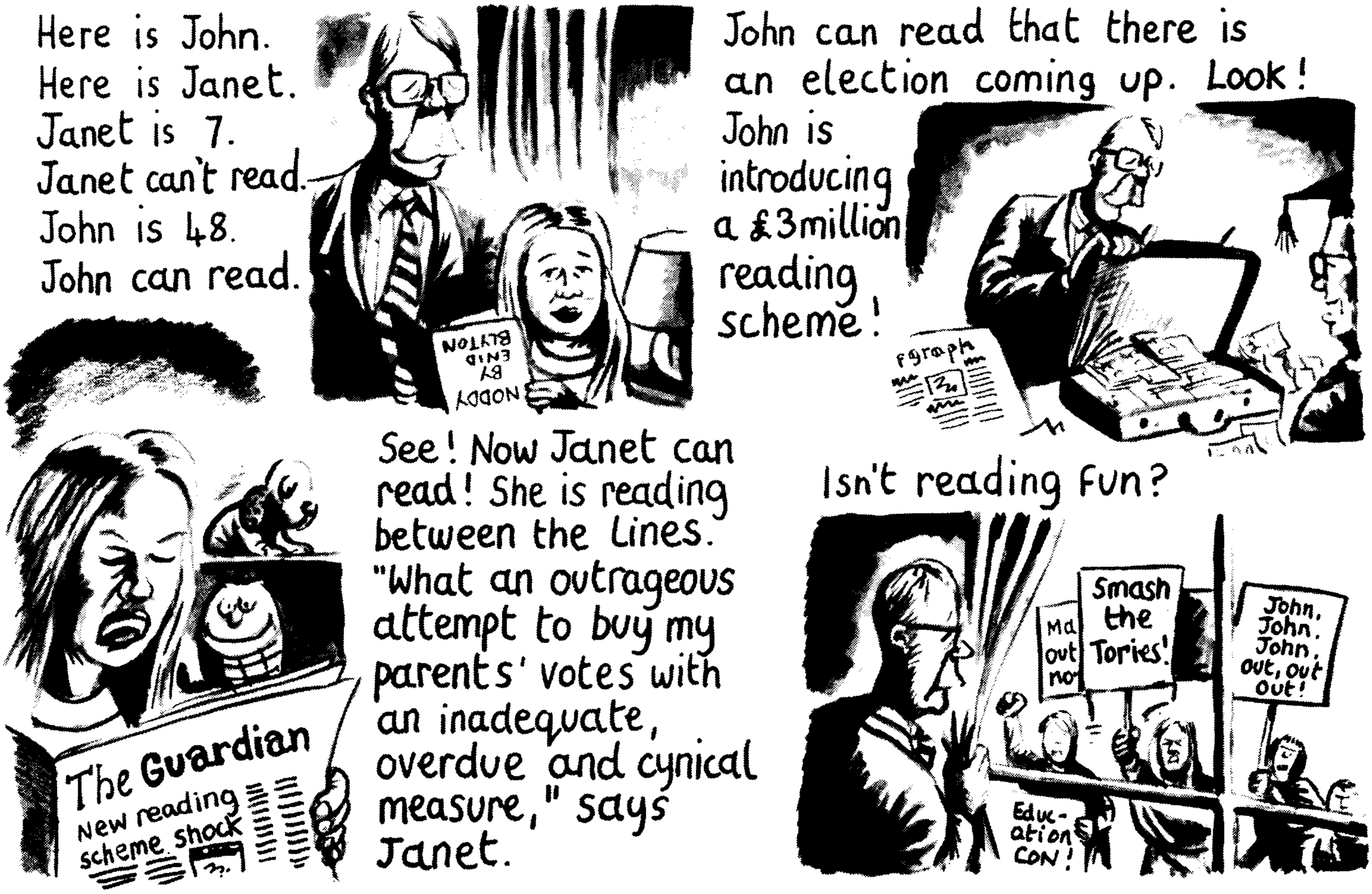
3. Er...

4. That's it.

Published by HM Government Stationery Office

Janet and John Learn To Read

National Curriculum Approved


Here is John.
Here is Janet.
Janet is 7.
Janet can't read.
John is 48.
John can read.
NODDY BY ENID BLYTON
John can read that there is an election coming up. Look!
John is introducing a £3million reading scheme!
Fgraph
See! Now Janet can read! She is reading between the lines. "What an outrageous attempt to buy my parents' votes with an inadequate, overdue and cynical measure," says Janet.
The Guardian
New reading scheme shock
Isn't reading fun?
Ma out no
Smash the Tories!
John, John, John, out, out Out!
Educ-ation CON!

New governor named for Hong Kong

by Our F.O. Staff **Leslie Whiteflag**

AFTER months of speculation, a replacement for the outgoing governor of Hong Kong, Sir David Wislon, was named last night by Mr Douglas Hurd.

In a confidential, off-the-record briefing, Mr Hurd revealed that the post had been given to Mr D.X. Ping, 84.

"Despite his great age," said Mr Hurd, "Mr Ping has all the qualities which the British Government has been looking for in candidates for this very sensitive appointment.

"Mr Ping speaks fluent Chinese, and is acceptable to the Peking government headed by himself.

"Furthermore," Mr Hurd continued, "Mr Ping has a firm grasp of his chopsticks, and has played a leading role in dragging the Chinese people kicking and screaming into gaol *(shurely 'the 20th century'? Ed)*

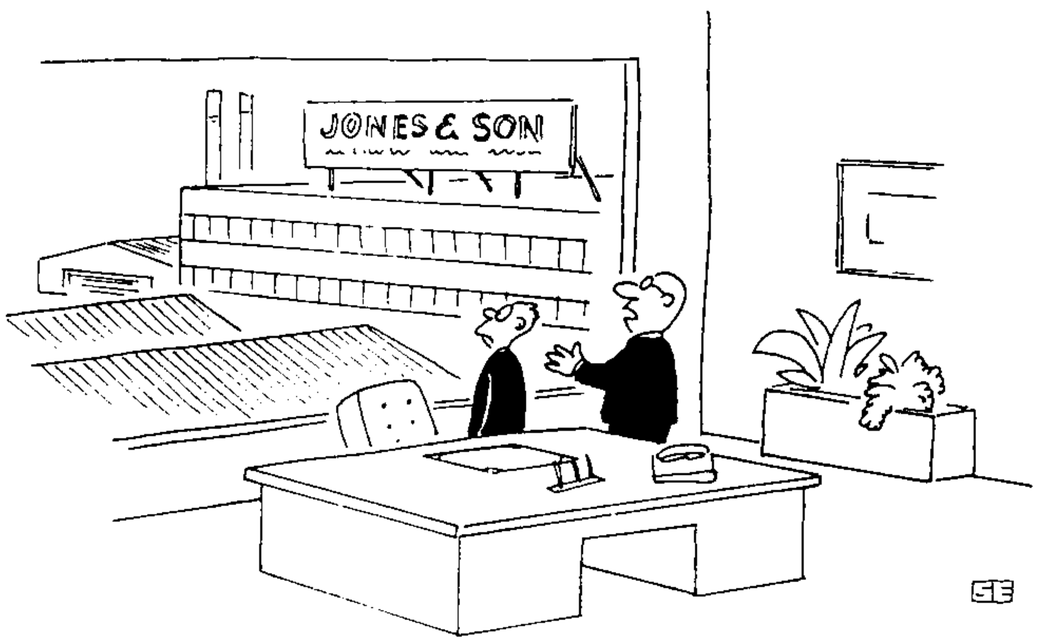
Mr D.X. Ping is 107.

17 JANUARY ● THE SUNDAY TIMES

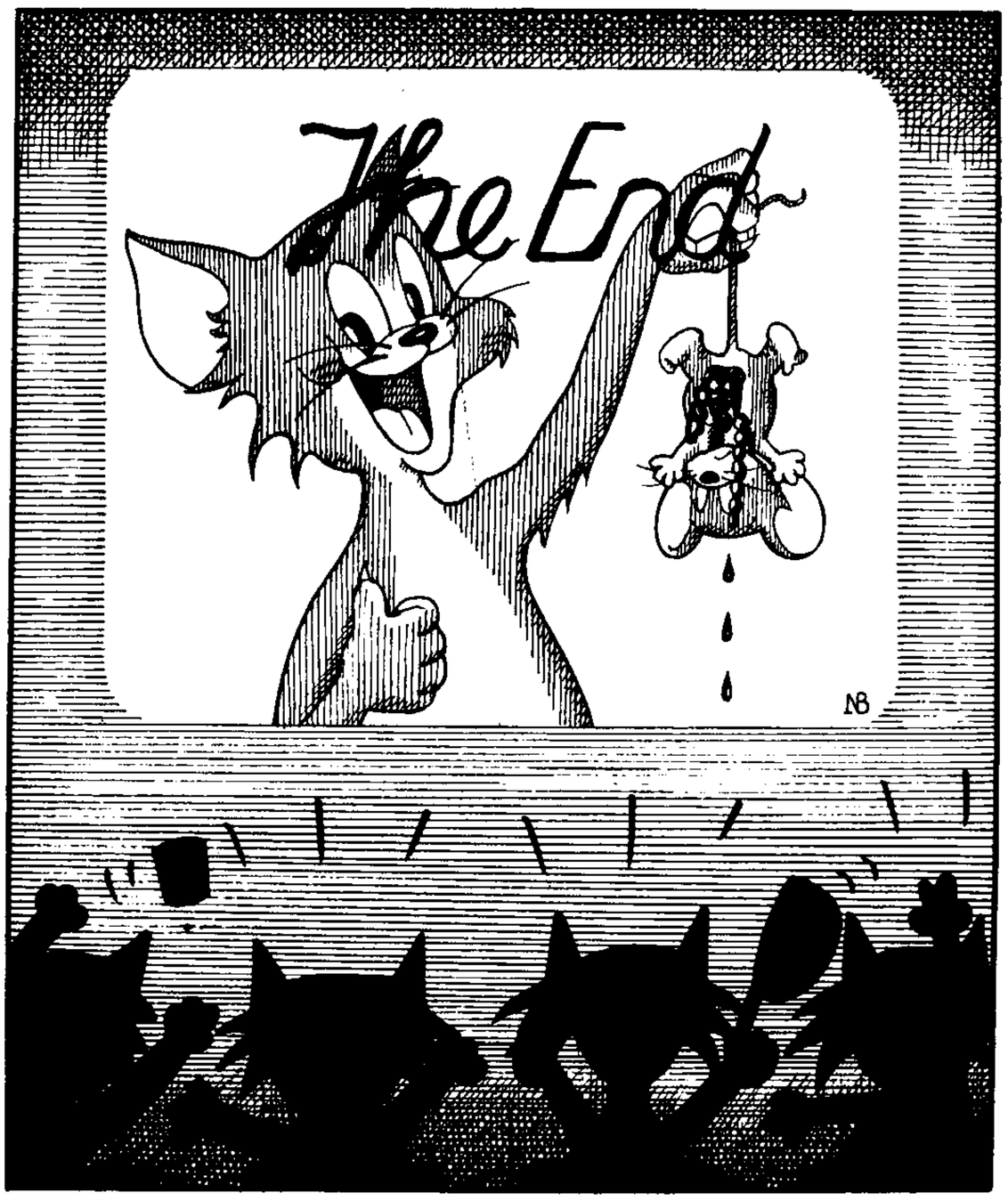
TOP TEN BORES

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on List
1	Richard Ingrams	1	4
2	The Oldie	2	4
3	Jonathan Miller	3	3716
4	Michelle Pfeiffer	–	–
5	Peter Jenkins	6	8,112,412
6	Simon Heffer	10	56
7	Sir John Harvey-Jones	8	22
8	John Maples MP	–	–
9	Stephen Fry	24	64
10	Sergei Prokoviev	–	–

The Bores were compiled with the assistance of the BBC's *See For Yourself* programme.



"One day, son, all of this will be the Receiver's"



Mass nostalgia as LDs are phased out

by Our Fashion Staff **L.P. Hartley**

I remember it as if it was yesterday — the day I first went into a booth and voted LD. Yet the kids of today don't even know what the initials stand for. And now comes the announcement that the LDs have come to the end of the road.

The dear old LD may have had its faults, with its scratchy crackling hiss, its beard, its sandals. But just think of some of those great names that first appeared on the LD label.

Remember Jeremy Thorpe and his *You Ain't Nothing But A Dead Dog*? Or Joe and the Grimonds? Or Whispering Roy crooning "If You Were The Only Shirl In The World, And I Was The Only Roy?" Or Bob McLennan and *Cry, Cry, Cry*. Or the Two Daves, and their chart-busting *Limehouse Blues*? And, most recently, the immortal Paddy Ashdown with a whole string of misses.

But now sadly, a whole era is drawing to a close. The powers-that-be tell us that the LD is out of date, and is to be replaced by that latest miracle of technology, the CP or Conservative Party. There is even talk of an entirely new shiny form of LP over the horizon, the digitally-remastered, dust-free, new-style Labour Party. But for dyed-in-the-wool aficionados of the dear old LD, warps and all, there will be anything like it.

Mr. Dundas in his own country has been ſomething like *the pelican in the wilderneſs*; nothing but ſuck, ſuck, ſuck; ſuck, ſuck, ſuck; and for *the very blood of him*, he has not been able to ſatisfy all his relations———

The Observer, December 4, 1791

Daily Mail
FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 1991
28p

LABOUR PLANS

SLAUGHTER OF THE FIRST BORN

by The Editor,

Sir David Fester

One of the first actions of a future Labour government, the *Daily Mail* can reveal, would be to murder the eldest children of all families in Great Britain.

This would mean, at a Central Office estimate, the deaths of some 10.6 million innocent toddlers.

In a secret memo, leaked to the *Mail*, Labour leader Neil Kinnock wrote last February to Mr John Smith:

Dear John,

Once we get our hands on the levers of power then it is essential that we carry out an immediate programme of juvenile mass-murder.

Last night Labour spokesman angrily denied the top-secret plans.

"How on earth did you find out?" said Gordon Brown, one of Kinnock's closest aides.

"Oh, no, it's a fair cop," admitted Tony Blair, another of the men behind Labour's genocide plans.

But most damning of all was the reaction of Neil Kinnock himself, who, when confronted by a *Mail* reporter at his £250,000 swanky Ealing split-level semi-detached house, opened fire on them with a machine gun, screaming: "You'll never live to tell the story, boyo!"

Mr Roy Hattersley is 57 stone.

What Labour's plans will mean to Mr and Mrs Average Briton

Salary	Tax Now	Labour Tax	Net Position under Labour
£80,000-plus	£0.49p	£90,000	Suicide
£40,000	£0.05p	£50,000	Bankruptcy
£20,000	£0.02p	£25,000	House repossessed
£5,000	£0.001p	£100,000	Imprisoned for debt
£0.00	£0.00p	– £1,000,000	Increases in benefits of up to £1,000,000 a year for each scrounging, work-shy immigrant posing as homeless

ON OTHER PAGES

Fit-as-a-fiddle Mother Teresa on 'Why I back John Major' p3

Why sexy Virginia Bottomley is better than ugly Clare Short, by Glenda Lee-Potter p5

'Lamont is genius' says Professor Stephen Hawking p4

Unfunny cartoon by Mac p17

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

The election campaign has started. I read it in the Daily Telegraph this morning, so it's official! After breakfast, my friend Chris came round to show me the new poster he has been working on for the past year. "This should knock Kinnock for six," he said. His poster showed a large bomb, ready to explode, with the caption VOTE CONSERVATIVE. He explained that the bomb was meant to represent Labour's secret plan to win the election by putting up taxes. He said: "Do you realise, John, that anyone earning over £30,000 will be clobbered?" "That means you and me," I replied, rather shocked. After a moment's thought, Chris said: "But then we'll both be out of a job, so it won't affect us." I felt greatly relieved.

Tuesday

In the Cabinet meeting, Norma Lamont was far from being his usual irrepressible self. Indeed he looked very considerably out of sorts. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have

a confession to make to you all." For some reason everyone sniggered, except me. "What is it, Norma?" I asked him in the sort of caring voice that some prime ministers never had. "I'm afraid I have miscalculated about the economy. You know I told you all that the recovery had started? Well" — and here he burst into tears — "I'm afraid there isn't going to be one. I just made it up so that you would all be pleased with me." For a moment there was a shocked silence round the table. But then Norma added: "However, I can give you my solemn assurance that all the classic ingredients for an economic upturn are now in place."

I was greatly relieved to hear this.

Wednesday

Mrs Thatcher has done it again. She really is, in my judgement, out of control. I heard on the Radio Two News that she has demanded that the pound should be devalued. What a stupid thing to say! Does she not understand the technicalities of the new ERM system, which we are now part of, thanks to her government? The rules are that you cannot devalue unless Mr Kohl gives his permission. I was about to ask him when she ruined everything by saying that I ought to, which obviously means that I cannot now do it.

Anyway, I was greatly relieved to hear later in the day that the pound had gone down on its own, with no help from anyone.

Thursday

Will Mr O'Donnell ever get it right, I am beginning to wonder. Last night I had to give the very important morale-boosting speech to launch our election campaign. Mr O'Donnell had chosen for my theme an honest admission that the economy was in a terrible mess. "It might get a few sympathy votes," he said, as he handed me my script. All went well until I got to the middle of p. 97, when I came to a passage which described everyone who is attacking the government as "Dismal Johnnies". Fortunately I spotted this just in time, remembering that in cabinet, whenever Norma Lamont uses the word "Johnnies", everyone giggles. So I hastily improvised and changed in to "Dismal Jimmies", which I thought was a rather inspired, off-the-cuff reference to the last Labour Prime Minister! "Mrs Thatcher never managed to make a joke like that," said Chris, when he heard what I had said on the next morning's Today programme, which he rather disloyally, to my mind, still listens to.

Friday

There was a not particularly pleasant moment today when we saw on the News that my friend Mr Bush had nearly died while he was in Japan. "That's terrible," said Mr Mellor. "Just imagine the country being taken over by a faceless and inexperienced nobody." At this point everybody bent double, and I assumed that they were all suffering from an attack of gastro-enteritis, like Mr Bush. However, I was greatly relieved to discover that they were all merely laughing, though I am not quite sure why.

Monday

The most important choice of my life now faces me, as I told the cabinet at our brainstorming weekend at Chevening.

"Is it to be May?" asked Mr Hurd.

"No," I said firmly. "The BBC have asked me to appear on Desert Island Disc's 50th anniversary in March." I thought everybody knew this, but many in the cabinet are rather slow on the uptake despite the advantages of having been to university. Still, some of them were not unhelpful in suggesting the choice of gramophone recordings. Mr Waldegrave proposed "We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go", which he said was a rousing marching song from "Oh What a Lovely War". Mr Rifkind said the most appropriate song was from "My Fair Lady", called "Why Can't A Man Be More Like A Woman?". I am not sure he has got that right. I made a note in my new Radio 5 notebook to ask Norma about this.

My friend David Mellor, who is very highbrow, said that I should choose something classical. "One of Bach's Three-Piece Suites, perhaps," Mr Hurd ventured and everyone laughed at him. Poor Douglas.

However, I have made my own decision on the records. I will decide nearer the time. I am my own man, oh yes.

The choice of book is not inconsiderably easier. It will be either Wisden 1959-60 or, as Jeffrey Archer suggested to me on the phone this morning, The Jeffrey Archer Omnibus (four best-sellers from the Master Storyteller in one handy volume).

The luxury is obvious. To be completely free of Mrs Thatcher and never to hear her voice ever again.

POETRY CORNER

Lines on the Decision of Hugh Montgomery Massingberd to drop Montgomery from his name.

So. Farewell
Then.

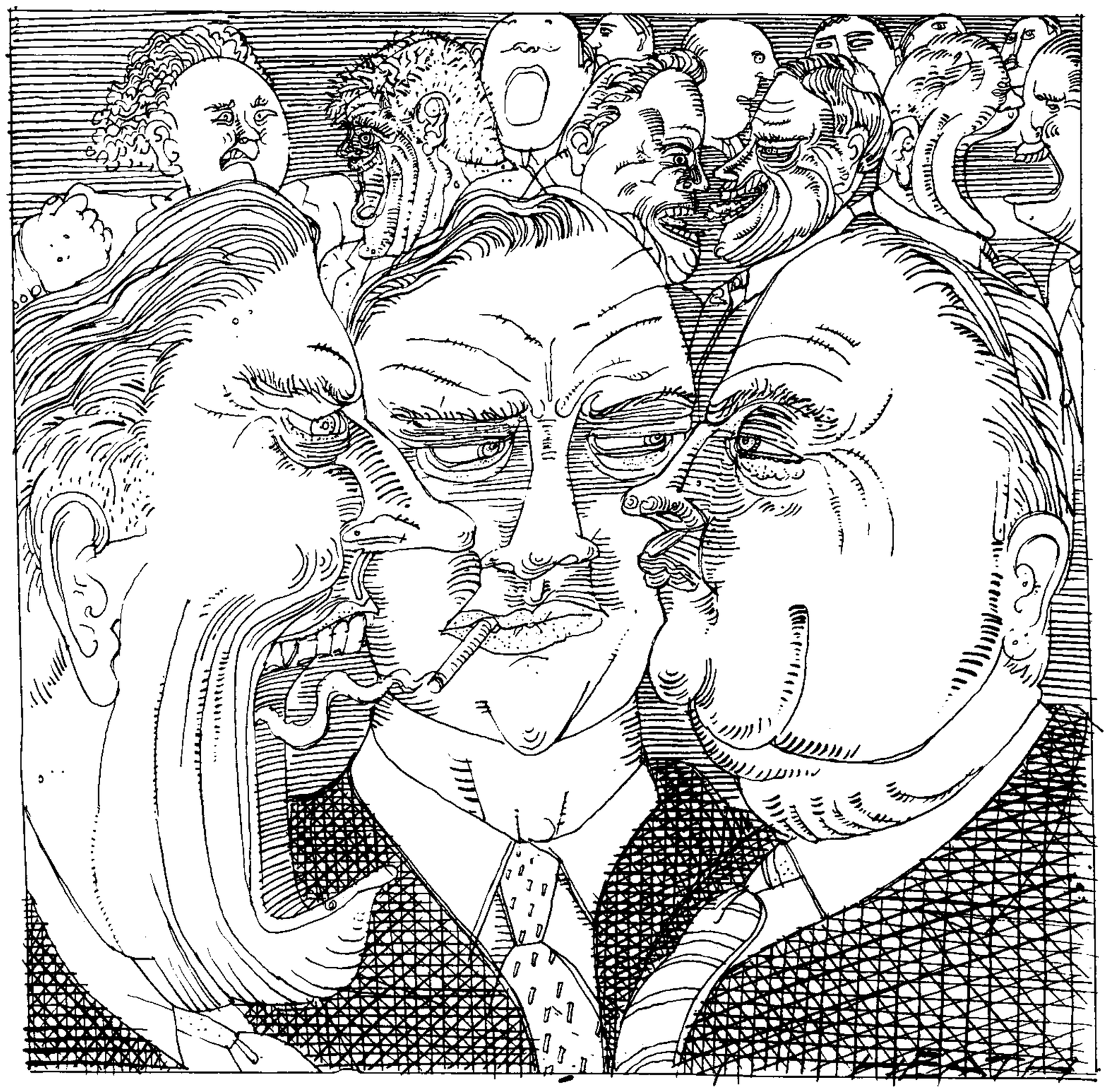
Hugh Montgomery
Massingberd.

From now
On you will
Be just Hugh
Massingberd.

It does
Not sound half
As good.

Quite frankly.

E. Montgomery Thribb (17½)



Great Bores Of Today.

"... it's been on the best-seller list for longer than any other book and now Spielberg's making a film of it I bought it when it first came out a lot of people say they found it incomprehensible but I thought that even though it's not immediately accessible it really is written in a very simple way what he's saying is that the universe didn't come into being as the result of a single explosion the Big Bang as such but it was a steady process if you look at Black Holes for example they still emit low-level radiation even though they have collapsed in on themselves you know what a quark is of course? well his stuff is quite brilliant though some people find it baffling you do have to use your imagination it's not something to read on the tube you have to give it your full attention it's amazing to think that he can unlock the secrets of the universe even though he is in a wheelchair and can't even talk to be quite frank I thought it tailed off towards the end but the first few pages are breathtaking..."

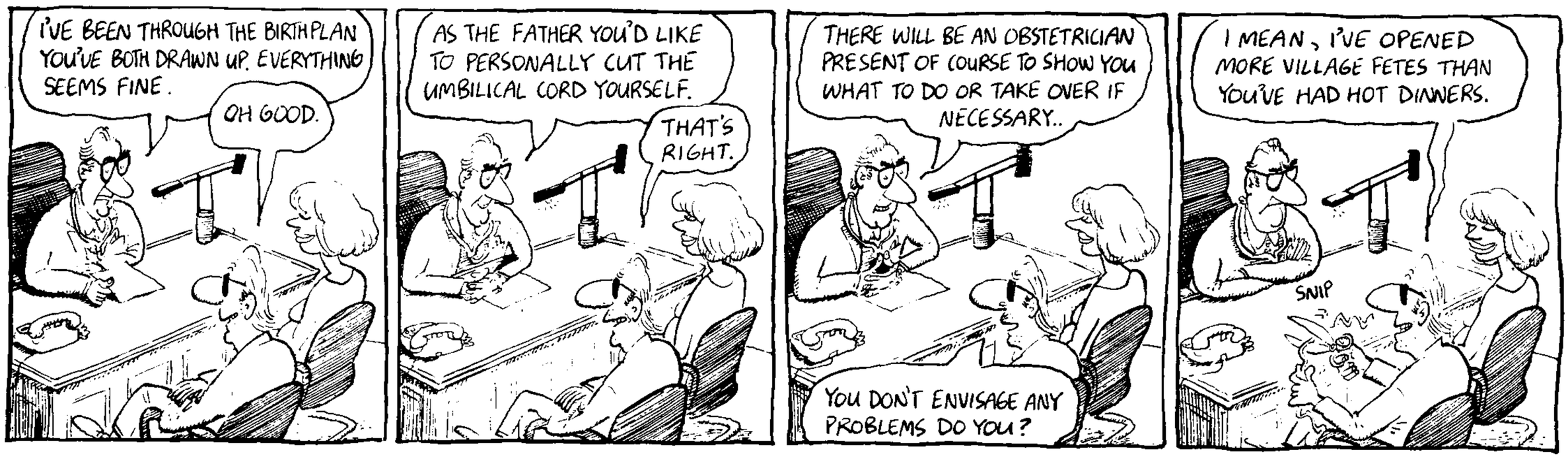
LATE NEWS

HISTORIAN'S STRANGE CLAIM

David Irving today claimed that he had "no knowledge" that he was a lunatic. "I was never told," he said, "but now I have seen documents that prove conclusively that I am completely barking." (*Reuters*)

Celeb

LIGGER


I'VE BEEN THROUGH THE BIRTH PLAN YOU'VE BOTH DRAWN UP. EVERYTHING SEEMS FINE.
OH GOOD.
AS THE FATHER YOU'D LIKE TO PERSONALLY CUT THE UMBILICAL CORD YOURSELF.
THAT'S RIGHT.
THERE WILL BE AN OBSTETRICIAN PRESENT OF COURSE TO SHOW YOU WHAT TO DO OR TAKE OVER IF NECESSARY..
YOU DON'T ENVISAGE ANY PROBLEMS DO YOU?
I MEAN, I'VE OPENED MORE VILLAGE FETES THAN YOU'VE HAD HOT DINNERS.
SNIP

I SEE RUSSIANS STARVING

by Our Man In London **Lunchtime O'Booze**

MARIA Madeitupovich shrugged her muscular Russian shoulders wearily. For fifteen days she had been queuing at the famous Bogusov No. 1 food store in Central Moscow, in the hope of buying a small piece of sausage to feed her 17-strong family.

But when she finally reached the front of the queue, clutching her pathetic bundle of million-rouble notes, the equivalent of an entire year's wages from her job in the Imaginari Tractor Factory, she was brusquely told by the assistant that the price of sausage had risen during the previous ten minutes to 20 trillion roubles, more than she could hope to earn in her lifetime, and anyway that the shop had not had any sausage since 1981.

As she trudged wearily back through the snow to her one-room flat on the Doesntexistski Prospekt, she shrugged her muscular Russian shoulders and said: "Yeltsin? Pah. He is finished. Things were better under Stalin. At least he made the sausages run on time." *(You're fired. Ed.)*

That Bush banquet menu in full

Seaweedy

— ❋ —

Dan Quayle's Eggs

— ❋ —

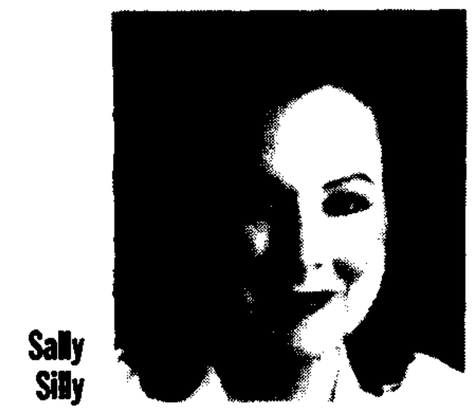
Raw Fish and Nips (Shurely 'Chips'? Ed.)
with
Gastroenter Rice

— ❋ —

From the hospital trolley
Blue Face Cheese
Oxygen Tail Soup
(Noodeals not available)

To drink
Saki
followed by
Siki

"Hurry, Father, Brian's receiving another fax from the Devil!"



Sally Silly

Nicola Coleridge

Alexandra Palace

Candida Mostyn-Wintour-Break

Fever grips nation over Vogue editorship

by Our Fashion Staff
Harp Lagerlout

THE entire nation has been paralysed with excitement all week by the mounting speculation as to who will get the most important job in the world, the editorship of *Vogue*.

Ever since the legendary Liz Bysmal, 49, announced her decision to leave *Vogue* to take up a post as Creative Consultant to the top New York style-magazine *Z-z-z-!*, the nation has been in a state of shock.

In pubs, clubs and wine-bars there has been no other topic of conversation. Trains have come to a halt, millions have stayed away from work and the BBC has announced a rolling news service on FM to cover events as and when they happen.

Dead Gloss

The news media are unable to keep up with the high demand for more pieces on the hottest subject of this or any other year.

The Samaritans report a record number of calls from people unable to cope with the stress of not knowing who will be the new editor, and demanded that the government step in to end the uncertainty.

Those Names

Among those who are hotly tipped for the Number One post in the world are:

● **Sally Silly**, 37, currently deputy-editor of *Flitz!* and a protegé of Sixties style guru Ninette de Strobois.

● **Alexandra Palace**, 35, legendary daughter of TV critic Mark Steyn, currently Assistant Features Editor of *Interior Women*, where she was recruited by her mother Drearilla Dreyfus.

● **Nicola Coleridge**, 17, daughter of Lloyd's "name" Sir Dodgy Syndicate Coleridge, currently Editorial Director of *Country Wellingtons*, the influential magazine about rural waterproof footwear.

● **Candida Mostyn-Wintour-Break**, 52, whose outspoken column "In My Kitchen" has helped to boost the sales of the *Dried Flower Monthly* to seven copies.

But insiders claim that none of these front-runners may land the most coveted post in the universe, and that the winner is likely to be the unknown outsider Maxwella Hastings, the brilliant 57-year old war historian who, in recent years, has transformed the once staid and fuddy-duddy *Daily Telegraph* into the most glitzy, smart, street-wise, up-front, sound-byte, Def II, yoof, rap, groovy, wicked, cool dude, rankin', Dellingpole *(That's enough with-it adjectives. Ed.)*

LATE NEWS

Pound collapses as Vogue uncertainty continues

Billions were wiped off share values yesterday, when there was still no announcement. *(Cont'd. p.94.)*

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: It is the annual meet of the South Highgrove Hunt (sponsor Hirohishi Microwave Ovens plc).

Now read on:

THE wintry countryside was covered with a filigree film of frost turning the trees and bushes into an exquisite lace tapestry, as if woven by a master craftsman.

Standing outside the old village pub "The King's Arms Dealer", Charles surveyed the magnificent scene so redolent of all that was finest in the English country heritage.

There they were, the snorting steeds with their beautifully groomed spottocks, their leather blunketts and their brass embonpoints gleaming in the pale January sunlight. The hounds yapping and panting, eager for the chase; and the proud tailcoated huntsmen and women resplendent in their red and gold tunics.

How good to see them all again on this cheerful Sunday morning. Some things, thank goodness, Charles thought, never change. There was Sir Roger de Scruton on his Arab stallion, Conservative Thinktank, and the bespectacled Professor Casey on Fogey's Boy, and wasn't that Baroness Malaprop QC, destined to be England's first lady chancellor, on her dappled grey, Kinnock's Duff? What a fine sight, to be sure, Charles thought. It reminded him of one of those paintings in his Mater's upstairs toilet at Balmoral. They were awfully good and last year he had tried to copy one but it was very difficult to get all the dogs looking the same size...

"A cup for you, Sire," chimed the beaming figure of the barman, Monty Knight-Bruce, who held aloft a silver salver bearing a stirrup cup.

"It's specially for you, Your Majesty. It's non-alcoholic, organic cherry brandy. God bless you and good hunting."

As the exquisite elixir coarsed through his veins Charles felt an inner warmth. There was an essential rightness about certain human activities which went back millions of years to our ancestors as they performed hunting rituals... er... each tribe led by a sort of... er... king figure as it were... what was that famous quotation of his friend and mentor Sir Laurens van der Post from his book, *Luxury Country House Hotels of the Cape — Revised 1989 edition*? "Hunting: The intangible in pursuit of the ineffable."

Yes how very true that was, the more one thought about it, even if it seemed a bit difficult at first sight...

The piercing ballyhoo of the hunting horn interrupted Charles's reverie and the baying of the hounds in response signalled that the hunt was off. Or rather on. Charles was a bit out of touch with the exact terminology thingie in these matters.

The horses moved off, their hooves clattering on the cobbled courtyard. Charles turned to wave to Diana as she sat in the front seat of the 4-wheel drive Akihito Pursuer but her head was buried in the latest issue of the *Hello* magazine which, to her obvious irritation, contained only 18 pages of photographs of herself compared to 64 of her sister-in-law, the Duchess Fergiana, on her skiing holiday in Bad Piszt. But no matter, Charles was cantering across old Farmer Rothschild's fields of rape seed, now over the wicket fence to Lord Hambro's kumquat orchards, now down the lane past the old church of St Trinian's, tastefully converted into the Price Waterhouse Business Conference Centre. As men and horses gathered speed in pursuit of their quarry, Charles felt a great surge of elation and wonderment. People could mock at the English, but when it came to maintaining traditions there was no one to beat them. He turned to speak to the rider next to him, whom he recognised by his top hat and pinstripe suit as the young Nigel Touche-Ross. But Nigel was deep in conversation on his portable phone and did not hear him.

"Sell Ratners," he was shouting, "and put it in Indonesian Long Bonds!"

Charles had no idea what his fellow huntsman was talking about but it was no doubt some old hunting argot with which he was not familiar.

Now they were on the edge of Telecom Wood and Charles was aware of another rider at his right side.

"Over there, Sire. They've picked up the scent." It was Sir Roger de Scruton, his eyes blazing. "You don't want to miss the kill, do you?"

"Kill?" Charles felt momentarily discomfited but it passed. "Yes, of course, we *do* have to... they are vermin after all, pests who must be controlled."

"Quite right, Sir," Sir Roger dug his spurs into the steaming grunwicks of his steed. "Glad to know you're on our side, Sire. There's too much sloppy sentimentality about these days. After all they harm the countryside, break fences and attack huntsmen."

"Really?" Charles was puzzled, his mind conjuring up visions of a new superbreed of fox leaping at Sir Roger and dragging him down from his horse.

As the two men galloped to the crest of Ferdy Mount, Sir Roger gave a cry of triumph. "Got him, the filthy bugger! Go on, Nigel, give him one with your whip!"

Charles looked in vain for a fox but all he could see was a bearded man in a duffle coat holding up a placard over his head in defence. The words on it read NEASDEN SABS SAY SAVE THE WHALE.

"Tally ho!" cried Sir Roger as with thundering hooves the pack closed in for the moment of truth.

(To be continued)

MUSLIM PARLIAMENT
OFFICIAL REPORT

INAUGURAL SESSION

HANSARCUTOFF
(previously Hansard)

Question Time

2.46 pm

The Right Honourable Dr Kalim Sidditious (representing no one): I would like to ask the Leader of the Assembly why Salman Rushdie is still walking around alive when all honest and right-thinking madmen want to kill him.

The Right Dishonourable Dr Kalim Sidditious (still representing no one): I agree with myself entirely. I urge everyone here to disobey the laws of this country, including the one about murder. *[Cries of "Hear! Hear!" from Dr Kalim Sidditious on the Front and Opposition benches]*

Speaker (Dr Kalim Sidditious, for it is still he): Order! Order!

Dr Kalim Sidditious (representing his own interests): After years of oppression, it is time that my voice was heard. We are told that this country is a democracy. Yet the will of the majority is imposed on everyone else. Some democracy! Only in a Muslim Parliament where unelected delegates obey the will of one unelected leader can there be real democracy. Let's vote! Hands up all those who want to kill Rushdie! *[Man with beard holds up hand]*

Vote Tallier (You guessed it, it's him): So that's unanimous. One vote for my motion. None against. Any other business?

Dr Killim Sadistically (representing absolutely no one, not even any Muslims): Yes! Mr Speaker, may I be allowed to bring up the question of the Fatwah against Mr Salman Rushdie... *[Continued p.94]*

"When they made you, Pasteur, they threw away the mould"

"Apparently he insisted on being buried in his baseball cap"

EXCLUSIVE TO ALL NEWSPAPERS

BLONDE GIRL TO MARRY MAN IN SUIT

by Our Front Page Staff **Will Thisdo**

A blonde woman, 27, is to marry a man in a suit, 28, it was announced today.

How They Are Related

Tim of Athens
|
A.J.P. Taylor
|
Elizabeth Taylor
|
Taylor Woodrow Wyatt
|
Tim, the Speaking Clock
|
The Duke of Marlborough Gallery
|
Tiny Tim
|
Tim Brooke-Taylor

Queen Sabrina of the Meloni
|
Mistress Melons
|
Dame Nellie Melons
|
Jumpin' George Mellons
|
Mel 'n' Griff
|
Lady Helen Windsurf
|
1st Duke of Beard
|
Lady Melon Windsor-Safari-Park

St Cakes

Checkland Term begins today. There are 4,812 pupils in the school. V.D.U. Laptop (Amstrad's) is Head of Templates. F.T. Repetitive-Strain-Injury (Wang's) is Captain of Software. Miss Amiga Floppy-Disk (Silicon's) is Head Girl. The Rev. Adrian Gropetrouser has retired to spend more time with his boyfriend. He will be replaced as Head of New Age Studies by His Holiness Shri Jim Bagwash Icke, the 15th Reincarnation of the Lord Vegi. The Gerald Ronson Business Studies Centre will be formally closed by Mr Ian Posgate (OC) on 23rd February. Ratner's will be run over Crap Meadow on the Feast of the Vasectomy (1st March). There will be a performance of *The Darling Buds of May*, adapted for the stage by Sir Alan Bennett (OC), on 15th March in the Glenda Jackson Arts Laboratory (tickets from the Bursar, Maj. N.F. Le Pen, Armbands, Voerword Road, Mosley. Repossessions will be on 21st March.

FINAL

The Daily Hellograph

40p

ESTABLISHED 1855 NO. 42,339

LONDON AND MANCHESTER

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 1992

Patricia Hodge admits 'I'm amazed'

By Our Political, Economic and Current Affairs Staff

A DELIGHTED Patricia Hodge *(Who she? Ed)* told the *Daily Hellograph* last night that she was delighted, at the age of 45, to have been put on the front page of the best-selling quality daily newspaper.

"It is a miracle," she said in a heartwarming interview given only to the *Daily Hellograph* and the other tabloids.

"To be honest," she said, fighting back the reporters *(shurely 'tears'? Ed)*. "I only ever expected to have a little story on the inside page of the *Express* or possibly *Today*. But when the doctors told me that I had delivered a huge front page photo story to a serious newspaper I was lost for words."

The father of the story, *Hellograph* reporter James Dellingpole, said that he too was "gobsmacked" by the sheer size of the picture.

"It is terrific news," he said. "Or rather it isn't news at all. Nature is wonderful. A few days ago the Hodge baby was little more than an agent's handout in a filing tray marked IF YOU'RE DESPERATE FOR A FILLER. And yesterday it knocked Russia and its starving millions right off the front page."

Hodge baby silent on Hellograph shocker

By Our Foreign, Home, Social and Sports Staff

PATRICIA Hodge's newly born baby, provisionally named Max Hastings Dellingpole Moore Hodge, has refused to comment on his mother's surprise appearance on the front page of the world's greatest newspaper.

Wearing an all-in-one romper suit, the baby remained tight-lipped during an exclusive and heartwarming interview with the *Daily Hellograph*.

When asked if he had any views on why his mother should appear in a total non-story all over the *Hellograph*'s front page, he smiled enigmatically and went back to sleep.

Patricia Hodge is 45.

ON OTHER PAGES

Princess Von Gazza's new range of swimwear 7,8,9

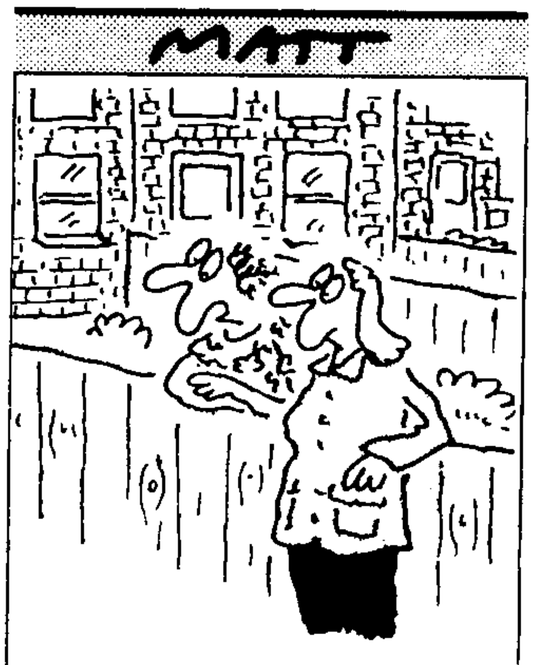
The Duke of Marlborough models the latest Y-Fronts 9,10,11,12,13

Financier Adnan Khashoggi shows us over his new wife *(shurely 'yacht'? Ed.)* 14,15,16,17,18

Daily Telegraph completely washed up 18-32

WEATHER

Sunny, Heartwarming
Details — Back Page



"Have you seen the photo of Patricia Hodge on the front page of the Hellograph?"

Hellograph owner to bed Sunday Times dish

(shurely 'wed Sunday Times award-winning columnist'? Ed)

By Our Media Staff Jane Thynne-Stuff

THE PROPRIETOR of the *Daily Hellograph*, Sir Conrad Blackadder, today announced his forthcoming enslavement to the heartwarming charms of top Canadian model Barbara Amiel.

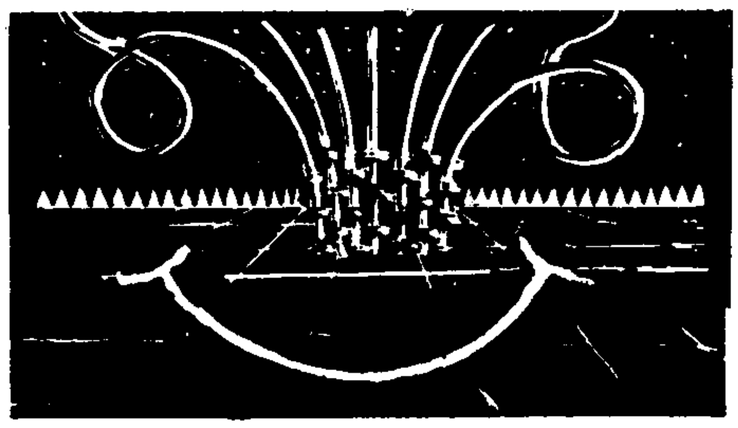
Said Sir Blackadder: "This is the sort of up-beat happy story that should go on the front page of the *Hellograph*."

Barbara Amiel is 56-26-36.

● **Hugh (Montgomery) Massivesnob** writes: This is the first time that a proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph* has featured in a divorce or indeed a *liaison amoreuse* with a prominent journalist from another newspaper. Inevitably eyebrows will be raised in conservative quarters, but in today's more liberal climate there can surely be no reason for censure. Sir Blackadder, it transpires, is descended from the French-Canadian moose breeder Jean-Luc l'Egover de Blackadder, and is also related through a distant kinsman of Ms Amiel on the distaff side, Moshe Sealtrapper, to his bride-to-be.

Full family tree continued page 94.

DIARY



TERRY WOGAN

'T is an ill wind, as me old mammy used to say. Come a month or two, and old Tel here will be presenting most pulchritudinously his very last show of that fully phantasmagorical — now there's a word for the old knapsack — thrice-weekly show called simply *Wogan*, yes, 'tis indeed.

Seven years. Ho hum. Can it really be seven years? It can indeed, indeed it can. Seven years. Well, fancy that. Seven years at the cutting edge. Well bless me cotton socks. To be a little bit serious just for one moment, I suspect that dear old Auntie Beeb might have trouble than she'd have us believe at finding a replacement quite as on-the-ball as yours truly, but that's another matter entirely. Too many hosts these days are, in my own humble opinion, rather too content to waffle on. But then that's the way the wind blows across the strawberry patch, as me old Irish granny used to tell us.

I was always more of a writer, more of a scintillating scrivener or weary-eyed wordsmith, than a star of the old magic lantern, so I'm delighted to seize this opportunity to remind myself and my readers, in Shakespeare's own dear language, of some of the highlights of my career in your sitting-room and on your hearth-rug. Let me unbutton the old jacket — ah, that's better — slump into the old easy-chair, take up the wondrous old Wogan quill, and begin:

I've long held a soft spot in the old ticker for actors and actresses, thespians all, and it's been my privilege o'er the past seven years to get to know some of these thrillin' theatricals on the old prog.

Ah, memories, memories. I remember asking dear old Jimmy Stewart — the late, great James Stewart — whether he was often recognised in public, and whether he had any thoughts on the matter.

Then I asked that easy-on-the-eye actress and singer-songwriter Cher how she first started off in the business.

And when the great Bob Hope came onto the show, I couldn't let him go without asking him whether "Bob Hope" was indeed his real name.

Dean Martin? Yes, I met him too, and my first question to him was whether he had always wanted to be a singer.

And I asked his old pal the great Sammy Davis Jr to explain just how he'd managed to stay at the top for so long. Good questions all, and everyone of 'em came back with a surprising revelation or amusing anecdote, as befits their superstar status.

What was it they said, I hear you ask! To be honest, at this distance in time, I forget their actual replies, but they were all thorough professionals, and our conversations — a bit of the old "verbal parrying", you might say — made for some of the most memorable shows in the series. Ho hum.

I like to think, in my own humble wee way, as my Scots grandpappy might put it, that I played an equally deft hand when it came to setting some of our top politicos at their ease. Often it's what I call the sideways question — the question they might not have been asked before, and they may well not be expecting — that is most revealing. Get 'em off their guard, and you can unearth some pretty telling revelations: that's old Tel's merry motto.

Let me give you a f'rinstance: when ex-Premier Edward Heath came on the old prog, I wanted to ask him what he really thought of his old rival Mrs T. As he sat down, I judged the time was right and I asked him, bold as the proverbial brass, if he had always favoured the lightweight, single-breasted suit. "Yes," he replied. "I find them easier for travelling, and they don't get too hot." We then spent the next four-and-a-half minutes chatting about clothes — socks, shirts, ties, we covered the lot.

To many viewers, it was a revelation, showing Heath in a lovely new light as a man who knew a bit or two about clothes. Of course, it left no time to ask him about his old rival Mrs T because petite Sheena Easton was scheduled to come on to give her latest number the old one-two, but Ted Heath's feelings towards that much-maligned lady are his own affair, and he told me privately afterwards that he's sick to death with press intrusion on the matter. Hear, hear, quoth I — let's not take curiosity too far, fellas.

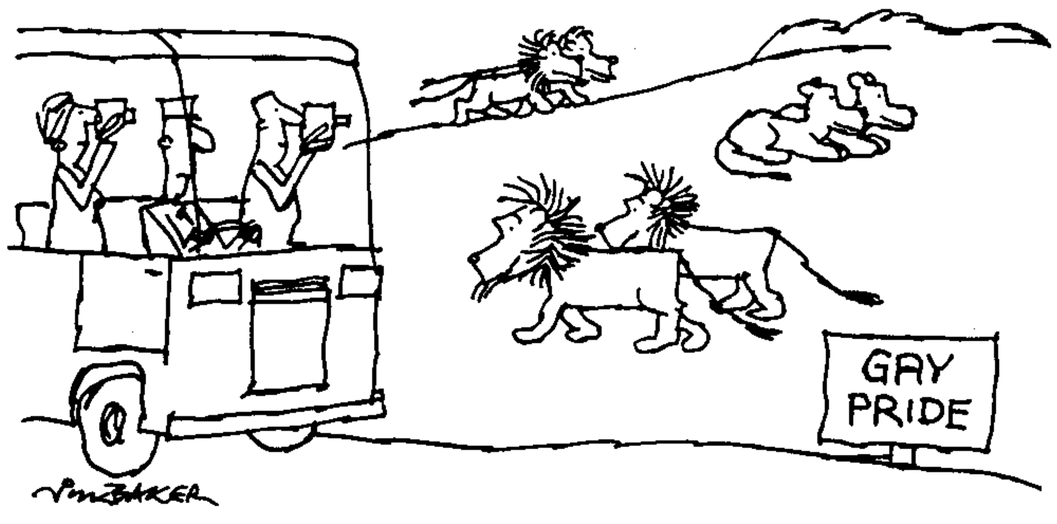
At heart, I remain the cheery chap from the fine old City of Limerick in the Emerald Isle, a fellow who likes to earn an honest penny, so I'm always interested to meet chaps who have a brass farthing or three to rub together, to coin a proverbial phrase.

"I don't mean to pry, Robert," I said to roly-poly publisher Robert Maxwell when he was a guest on the show a couple o' years back, "but you must be worth a bob or two. And yet at heart you remain a family man with simple tastes, am I right?" I remember he gave me a lovely warm smile and said that I had hit the nail on the head.

I was always fascinated to meet millionaires with their own companies and houses on the River, so different from the rest of us bare-footed paupers. "I suppose you can eat in all the best restaurants and buy quality bottles of the old vino," I said to the Duke of Westminster in 1987. Ivana Trump, sometime better half of Donald Trump, agreed with me when I said that it must be lovely having all that extra dough so as to give some to your favourite charity. Ah, well — we can't all be as rich as Croesus, that marvellously mythical fellow — but it's fun to find out about those who are!

To be perfectly frank — and why not, I ask myself?! — it's been many moons since I've troubled these dear little legs o' mine to take me into the *Wogan* theatre. Save yourself the shoe-leather, Terence, old chap, I told myself three years ago, and I haven't set foot in the theatre since, preferring to relax 'midst family and furry friends, basking in the dappled glades of Taplow, Bucks.

Bend back your lugholes, and I'll explain. Ever wondered why the Tel you see on the gogglebox has more of the old hair than he did three years back? Y'see, long ago, it dawned on me that I only ever asked the same six questions, whoever I was interviewing. If it were a politician, I asked him how he liked to relax, if it were a soap star I asked where whether she'd ever been mistaken for her character in real life, and so on. Hey presto, Bob's your uncle and toodle-oo, I arranged for old film of yours truly, asking these very same questions, to be played to all my new guests, thus preventing any need for old Tel himself to turn up! Result? A carefree show, as lively as a tender young lamb in spring. Whoops! My time's run out. Ho hum. Cheerio!



Doctors 'very concerned' about Mother Teresa

Independent

ONLY people earning "well over" £30,000 a year will be forced to pay Labour's planned 50p top rate of tax, Neil Kinnock said yesterday, amid mounting Conservative attacks on his party's tax policies.

Grauniad

Literary Review

Odd hobbits

The History of Middle Earth 9: Sauron Defeated
J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien
(HarperCollins, £20)
The Tolkien Family Album
John & Priscilla Tolkien
(HarperCollins, £12.99)

J.R.R. TOLKIEN wrote *children's* stories. *The Hobbit* was originally read to his three boys when the eldest was 13. The publishers, Allen & Unwin, accepted it because in 1936 the chairman's son, Rayner Unwin, wrote this enthusiastic report:

"Bilbo Baggins was a hobbit who lived in his hobbit-hole and *never* went for adventures, at last Gandolf the wizard and his dwarves perswaded him to go. he had a very exiting time fighting goblins and wargs. at last they got to the lonley mountain; Smaug, the dragon who gawreds it is killed and after a terrific battle with the goblins he returned home — rich! This book, with the help of maps, does not need any illustrations it is good and should appeal to all children between the ages of 5 and 9".

The age limitation was finely placed. Rayner Unwin was 10 at the time.

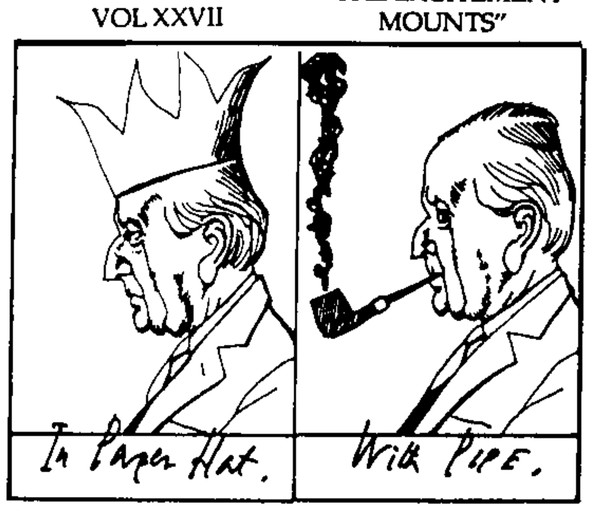
No better appreciation of Tolkien has been written or is needed. With the qualification that Tolkien's writing appeals also to those with the mental age of a child — computer programmers, hippies and most Americans — it was an accurate assessment of the market, too. Alas, there are so many such retards in the world that it profited his publishers to pretend that Tolkien was a *proper* writer.

For years, Tolkien was the milch cow of Allen & Unwin, and then Unwin Hyman, until even his royalties failed to save the firm from being gobbled up by Murdoch's HarperCollins. This month is the centenary of Tolkien's birth. Accompanied by new editions of *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*, these two books are HarperCollins's attempt to cash in.

The "family album", by Tolkien's eldest son and his daughter, is a harmless collection of banal snaps — Tolkien's hideous retirement villa in Bournemouth, the family on holiday in Lyme Regis, some of the hens the family kept during the war — introduced with an harmoniously banal text.

"The study was very much the centre of Ronald's [Tolkien's] home life, and the centre of his study was his desk... We vividly remember a row of coloured Quink and Stevenson inks and sets of sealing-wax in different shades to match his large supply of stationery." Wow! Sure beats the incest and infidelity, the boozing and buggery you get in most modern memoirs? Or maybe not.

Sauron Defeated, assembled from Tolkien's wastepaper basket by his youngest son, Christopher, will,



however, be enthusiastically welcomed by all right-thinking people. For, inadvertently, it does more damage to Tolkien's reputation than a dozen critics ever could. Everything published by Tolkien's estate since his death has made him seem an ever greater bore, but this volume is an unparalleled triumph of tedium.

Christopher Tolkien was originally supposed to keep this "account of the writing of *Lord of the Rings*... within the compass of three fat volumes". He has stretched it to nine by including every draft and repetitious jotting, all carefully collated. His scholarly approach serves nicely to show up Tolkien's infantilism.

"The name of the sole surviving orc beside Shagrat is *Radbug* in both C and D (*Shaga* in RK: see LR appendix F, p.409), *Radbug* being retained in the final story as the name of an orc whose eyes Shagrat says that he had squeezed out (RK p.182); in C the orcs whom Sam saw running from the gate and shot down as they fled are *Lughorn* and *Ghash Muzgash* (*Lagduf* and *Muzgash* in D, as in RK)", reads a typical note — for all the world as though it mattered.

These *Lord of the Rings* offcuts fill only a third of the book. The rest is padded with an astonishingly silly story about the members of an Oxford discussion club who start dreaming themselves into various Norse sagas, somehow connected to Atlantis. Capping even this is a final section in which Tolkien gives a full grammar of one of his nauseating invented languages, "Adunaic", complete with declension tables and pronunciation guides ("The continuants "W, Y; L, R, Z are pronounced voïceless after the aspirates, but otherwise suffer no change.")

"Literature", admits one of the members of the discussion club, "may have a pathological side." That Tolkien should, for whatever reason — religion, wartime trauma, or routine bad taste — have wanted to turn out such trash is depressing enough. That his least scribble should subsequently be dignified by such laboriously scholarly publication is grotesque.

And if Tolkien did us all a bad turn by making it possible for the likes of David Eddings and other lo-talent drudges to make money by droning on about dungeons and dragons, he did something worse to his own family.

Originally he made fantasies appealing in order to entertain his children. Now his children are employed by his fantasies. It's usual for the offspring of famous writers to find themselves in their parent's shadow. But the fate of Christopher Tolkien, adjudicating between orcs, volume after volume, is surely nearer to penal servitude.

Books & Bookmen

ADMINISTRATORS Price Waterhouse have been given the go-ahead to sell the late Cap'n Bob's Macdonald Group in the UK if a buyer can be found and not necessarily as part of a job lot with US Macmillan Inc.

Three of the suitors are ex-employees of the Bouncing Czech at Macdonald. Tim Hely Hutchinson, mastermind behind one of Britain's few currently successful publishing houses, the publicly quoted Headline, and "Skinny" Cheetham, successor to and embracer of Lord Popeye are two of them. Tempting though it must be for Tim and Tony to have a go at acquiring their old firm dirt cheap, they really should resist the impulse if only because of speculation about the pension fund, part and parcel of the mislaid MCC one.

Simon & Schuster, still struggling to make its presence felt here, is also interested, managing director big Nick Webb having departed Macdonald only last summer to assume the same job at Simon & Schuster. Nick would like to be reunited with those of his old muckers still at Macdonald.

Another interested buyer is Reed International publishers of 1991, who discovered that they could de-net all their titles and yet, as far as most dozy publishers are concerned, the Net Book Agreement remains in place and sacrosanct. The Macdonald list would lie down well with some of the schlockier Octopus products, and the vigorous upmarket Abacus and Cardinal paperback lists would meld easily with Minerva.

There would, though, be the problem of where to put the new incumbents as Michelin House is full. Having insisted last year that Mitchell Beazley move from its much loved offices in Manette Street into the characterless morgue of Retread House, shockhaired "Struwwelpeter" Richard Charkin has now pushed Methuen out of Fulham Road and a few streets away into the Kendrick Mews offices of Sinclair-Stevenson. In the case of poor Methuen, which has just agreed to part with £200,000 to publish John Betjeman's correspondence, it has to be regarded as exile.

Methuen's presiding guru, grizzled Geoffrey Strachan, meditating in Kendrick Mews, is as unlikely prospect as Bonaparte on St Helena. As for Sir Sincere, his publicity director Angela Martin will henceforth have to service the jolly Methuen humorists and bearded leftie playwrights as well as the upper crust Sincere-Stevenson list.

HEINEMANN Australia, as publisher of *Spycatcher*, is well used to expensive court cases. Just as well. It is about to be dragged into another one thanks to Peter Wright's pisspoor new tome *The Spycatcher's Encyclopedia of Espionage*.

The encyclopedia's entry for "Cambridge" notes that the university was a "hotbed of treachery" in the 1930s and lists "some of the spies we knew about". As well as all the old favourites (Blunt, Burgess, etc) there is the surprising name of Brian Simon, son of Lord Simon.

Certainly Simon was at Cambridge, was a friend of Guy Burgess and, like many of his contemporaries, was left-wing in his politics. But he has never been accused by the British government (or anyone else, until now) of being a spy. Even the Soviet agent John Cairncross, who was at Cambridge with him, has never heard any suggestion of his being involved in espionage; nor was Simon's name ever mentioned to Cairncross while he was being interrogated by MI5 in the 1960s.

Perhaps Peter Wright (or his daughter Jenny, who is thought to have written most of his tedious encyclopedia) assumed that Brian Simon was dead, and therefore couldn't contest the book's absurd allegation. But in fact Professor Simon, now of Leicester University, is very much alive — and suing. The 76-year-old has instructed solicitors Pannone March Pearson to issue libel writs against Wright and Heinemann Australia both Down Under and in England.

'Bookworm'

BREL

Rolling stock — or laughing stock?

MORE revelations have emerged in the scandal of British Rail Engineering Ltd, which until it was privatised used to turn out reasonably high quality products like the InterCity 125.

Eye readers will not need reminding how the company was slimmed down to the point of emaciation by the Government and then flogged off to the road transport lobby (who give millions of pounds each year to Tory funds) in the shape of Trafalgar House.

But now even the comatose Commons select committee on transport has woken up and is "investigating" the scandal of the 158 — the express diesel unit that eventually appeared 18 months late — causing chaos and hardship to millions of BRs passengers — and was promptly withdrawn because it had fallen to bits.

According to this month's edition of *Modern Railways*, the latest twist to this tale is very black indeed. BR is not suing BREL for the late arrival and disastrous performance of the 158 as countless commuter and passenger rail users groups are urging it to. Instead *BREL* is suing *BR*!

This piece of craziness emerged after the Commons select committee summoned the chairman of BREL, John Darby, to appear before it. He, however, refused to answer any questions on 158 liability because, he said, the purchase contract contained a confidentiality clause — and because any estimates he might give *might prejudice BREL's claims against BR*. He refused to answer any more questions on the subject and the meeting broke up.

The root of the problem is not the confidentiality of the 158 contract but the confidentiality of the original BREL privatisation sale, which was stuffed full of secret sweeteners.

So ideologically obsessed was the Government with privatising BREL that it deliberately (and secretly) wrote into the contract that BR could not make any claims on BREL for late arrival of equipment. And should BR at any later stage demand alterations in the equipment — for example by saying "This piece of equipment you've just sold us doesn't work, please go away and alter it so it does" — would be grounds for BREL to demand compensation!

Not only does the cash-strapped BR now have to endure the millions of pounds of lost revenue (to say nothing of the anger of stranded passengers) caused by the late arrival of the 158s, but it will now have to pay BREL for that late delivery and its abysmal performance!

Arms

French let-out

AS BRITAIN and the United States demand the extradition from Libya of two security officers to stand trial for the Lockerbie bombing, the threat of international sanctions against Colonel Gadaffi is causing some embarrassment in the New World Order — not least in France.

Anyone who recalls the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbour will know that the duplicity of French foreign policy knows no bounds. But now even washed up President Mitterrand faces an acute dilemma over the call for sanctions by his "allies".

During the week of 15 December, Libya sent one of its C130 transport planes to Merignac Airport near Marseilles. The aim was to pick up military equipment — the first load of a one billion franc order for spare parts to refurbish and recommission Mirage jets. Due to a lack of parts the aircraft have been grounded in Libya for the last eight years; and the collection flights will continue for at two-weekly intervals until the contract is fulfilled.

The transportation is being arranged through a Paris-based company, Danzas, and one the intermediaries for the transactions is the Geneva-based company, Fitex SA, whose principal is Salah Fitury. And Mr Fitury could never have put the deal together without the help of a certain Monsieur de l'Etoile, a member of the DGSE, the French secret service, and a member of the Libyan embassy called Moustapha Ghariany.

Electricity privatisation

Eye told you so

LESS THAN a year after the 60 percent privatisation of the electricity industry, the man who deserves a major share of the blame for inventing the system has given a cry of rage on discovering that it isn't working.

Professor Stephen Littlechild has accused the two major generators, National Power and PowerGen, of "manipulating" the system "so as to exercise monopoly power".

Well, what a surprise! The *Eye* predicted this would happen nearly a year ago. On 15 February we wrote: "The best way to make money is by producing less electricity. NatPowerGen is blessed every time it shuts down a power station. Reduce the electricity available and the grid price for it goes up."

Now Professor Littlechild, director-general of OFFER (the Office of Electricity Regulation), has accused NatPower and PowerGen of using their dominant position to push up the pool price and is demanding that they come forward, by the end of this month, with proposals to ensure that it can't happen again.

National Power has 50 percent of the market and PowerGen 30 percent. Littlechild says anything more than 25 percent constitutes a dominant position and he wants the two big boys cut down to size. There is no chance that this will happen. It is asking monopolies to stop behaving like monopolies and requesting National Power to shed half its power stations.

The problem might have been avoided if the Central Electricity Generating Board had been split into ten different companies. Instead it became a duopoly dominated by former CEGB colleagues.

So how did we get to this situation? Coming so soon after privatisation, the Professor was asked, did it not show that there was something wrong with the plan? He replied: "This was a matter for the Government." He was being too modest.

The plan came from the Centre for Policy Studies, invented by Keith Joseph, the mad monk, who gathered around him a group of eccentric academics, all monetarists, of whom one Professor Stephen Littlechild was a leading member.

Nuclear Power

Magnox out

IT WAS highly unedifying to see the Government's nuclear watchdog cave in shortly before Christmas to pressure from the industry to allow the United Kingdom's oldest nuclear power stations to run for 10 years past their design lives.

In September, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate had seemed to take a tough line with Nuclear Electric on the ageing Magnox stations. It said it would have to be satisfied by the end of the year that four of NE's remaining seven Magnox plants could be operated safely for up to 30 years or the stations would have to shut.

A key NII request was that NE carry out a programme of volumetric or "through-thickness" inspections of the welds on the reactors' pressure vessels, which hold the nuclear cores. The NII said such tests were necessary "to provide us with the required level of confidence" in the continuing integrity of the pressure vessels.

The inspectorate spelled out how critical this issue was in a letter it sent to Greenpeace on 9 December: it said it viewed any risk of a pressure vessel failure as "unacceptable because of the volume of radioactive material that could be released".

Soon, however, the NII had demurely accepted NE's insistence that volumetric testing was not feasible and that even if it could be done, the results would not be reliable. More recently, John Rimington, the director general of the Health & Safety Executive (the NII's parent organisation) and husband of the new MI5 boss, told a Greenpeace delegation that it was "impossible" to inspect all the vulnerable parts of the reactor pressure vessels but that an adequate safety case could be made from "partial inspection and extrapolation" and reliance on the vessels initial pressure tests. These were conducted *before* the reactors started operating, more than 25 years ago.

The pressure on the nuclear industry to persuade the NII to relax its stance was enormous. Not only would the closure of the four plants at the end of this month have cut NE's effective generating capacity (and revenue source) by about 20 per cent, but it would have saddled the company with the costly liability of defuelling them. This twin economic setback would have scuppered NE's ludicrous attempts to show that nuclear power is an economic and profitable means of producing electricity ahead of the Government's review in 1994.

United Nations

UN-convincing

AS THE contracts of senior United Nations officials finish at the end of February, all have been waiting with baited breath to see how Boutros Boutros Ghali, the new secretary-general, fares.

His first essay in power brought good news and bad. Under-secretary general Rafeeudin Ahmed, who had refused Javier Perez de Cuellar's request to head the peace-keeping mission in Cambodia (he confided to friends it was not a lucrative post and, anyway, his wife liked New York), was a choice by Ghali: Phnom Penh or no position at all. Ahmed graciously accepted.

However, the Japanese got wind of this. As they are paying for much of the operation — Japanese companies have busily bought up the Phnom Penh real estate market — they want someone to protect their investments, and so insisted on a Japanese head for the UN mission. Ahmed's days are now said to be numbered.

At least the Cambodian peace mission is going ahead: in the unstable Western Sahara, even the Security Council found de Cuellar's spinelessness too much and refused to accept his report. This would have allowed crazed King Hassan of Morocco to ship in as many Moroccans as he wanted to vote in his referendum.

High ranking UN officials had already passed over a computer disk with confidential voter lists to the Moroccan government. De Cuellar denied it — or rather, reading between the lines, said that the head of the Western Sahara UN mission denied it. The inquiry that was set up tried hard to find out who had leaked the story, and issued a statement saying it had not been leaked by a high-ranking official. That was because a high-ranking official had ordered a *low-ranking* official to hand it over.

With Indonesian troops, no doubt veterans of East Timor, among the UN peace-keeping force in the territory, and with Morocco on the Security Council, 1992 could prove hot indeed for the Western Saharans.

Police

Alison Blunderland

IN THE macho, gun-toting world of the Merseyside Police Authority there is clearly no room for the calming influence of a woman. They still want to get shot of Alison Halford, Britain's top woman police officer, and she was again suspended from duty last week (*Eye* 773).

Passed over on numerous occasions for promotion, Assistant Chief Constable Halford had instituted a sex discrimination case against the authority. Her efforts were met with a counter-attack of gross misconduct charges from the masonic misogynists who run her force.

They claim that while in operational charge, Halford stripped down to her undies for an afternoon swim. Another implication was that she had been "bonked" in the pool by an accompanying sergeant; but the medical evidence for that won't stand up in court.

The prejudice against Halford also involved a heavy dose of homophobia. George Bundred, the police authority chair, has been saying for more than a year that Halford is a lesbian because she lives in the same house as another woman. "I'm having no fucking queer, man or woman, in my force," is Bundred's elegant comment whenever the subject is raised in the boozer.

Last month, Justice MacPherson threw out the misconduct case in the high court, saying the behaviour of members of the authority had "the smell of unfairness about it". Bundred was too enraged to comment; but his vice-chair Harry Rimmer pledged that the authority would reinstate disciplinary charges against Halford — and it has.

This vendetta has so far cost the local taxpayer £150,000. It went ahead against the advice of the police authority's own counsel, and Bundred, Rimmer & Co may therefore be surcharged.

WHILE arguments continue over whether arming the police might only serve to escalate violence, such concerns cut little ice with Jim Sharples, Murkeyside's chief constable.

He is a national spokesman on the use of firearms for the Association of Chief Constables, and as "Sharp-shootin' Jim" has just introduced permanent armed response vehicles — where cops have revolvers and automatic rifles in the car boot — on to his patch.

Their first day of operation produced an incident which underlines inherent dangers. A 45-year-old man was playing cowboys and indians with his children, firing off a toy gun in his front living room. Within minutes his house was surrounded by scores of armed coppers.

When he opened the door, he was blinded by searchlights and had a loaded revolver stuck in his face. He and his son were then bundled into a cop car, driven down to the local nick and charged with a "breach of the peace" offence.

At a time when the police authority regularly complains about lack of resources, it seems only too capable of an "overkill" turnout whenever the glamour of guns in involved.

Democracy

Still Kuwaiting

IT IS GOOD to see life returning to normal in democracy-loving Kuwait. Amid tight security, the twelfth summit of the Gulf Guarantee Council met from 23 to 25 December and a good time was had by all. Well, nearly all.

As usual the summit achieved nothing: decisions were postponed to future summits or delegated to ministerial committees. But the GGC is not *entirely* toothless: a huge dinner, followed by a large breakfast, followed by an enormous lunch and another huge dinner was consumed by the six monarchs and their entourages.

The food for the potentates and their private secretaries, ministers, under secretaries, valets, servants, security guards, doctors, "nurses", girlfriends and so on was frightening: a catering budget of two million Kuwaiti dinars (around $6 million) provided 250 tons of fruit and vegetables; 5,000 kilos of chicken; 2,000 kilos of shrimps; 260 sheep; 500 cakes; thousands of loaves; and thousands of kilos of beef.

All were checked by health inspectors and "bomb disposal experts"; all were shipped to the $20m newly constructed tents at the Bayan Palace, the government's new headquarters (the old one was destroyed by the Iraqis) and the waste was phenomenal: some rulers brought their own food and cooks.

To most Kuwaitis the summit was no more than an obscenely extravagant nuisance: road blocks, airport closures, endless hours of television coverage on three out of four channels (all showing the same programme starting with the arrival of each monarch at the airport to his departure two days later), along with numerous pages in daily newspapers.

Those who suffered most, however, were the foreigners. The security forces set up dozens of checkpoints weeks before the summit and all expatriates were harassed — mainly for not having residence permits at a time when the government has no declared or clear policy on who is to be allowed to stay and who will be forced out.

Palestinians, Jordanians, Yemenies, "Bedoons" (stateless) and, of course, Iraqis were randomly imprisoned, tortured, deported or all three. It is of course likely that many of them served Kuwait more than many Kuwaitis did either during the occupation or before.

Satanic Abuse

Orkney questions

AS THE "satanic abuse" public inquiry rumbles on in Orkney, the Government has promised financial help — with strings — to the Orkney Island Council (OIC). It will have to pay no more than £150,000 for the incompetence of its social services department so long as the mega-expensive inquiry packs up by the end of March.

What it will have to pay if the inquiry runs until August, as most think it will, is unclear. OIC councillors have been told that the Government's financial aid package is very complicated — so complicated many don't understand it — and they have been sworn to secrecy.

Whatever the inquiry's outcome, police and social services are united in attacking the media. McKnacker claims the police were hampered in looking for the quarry in which the ritual abuse of children was said to have taken place because public opinion had been so inflamed by the press.

This completely ignores the fact that police knew all about the allegations a full two weeks before the snatches were made. And it is somewhat unfair to attack the media just because social services and police preferred to snatch the children before looking for any evidence.

Local members of Nalgo, the social workers' union, had their revenge, however, when they refused to take part in a charitable Children in Need quiz chaired by BBC Scotland's Jane Franchi. They said Ms Franchi's reporting of the snatches had been biased and so would not attend. They were not missed.

One thing the inquiry has not heard is a report of the visit to St Margaret's Hope primary school by a busload of social workers who plucked children from their classes. One nine-year-old girl ran through the corridors screaming "Help me, help me!" while a boy of five was so terrorised he locked himself in a lavatory.

Mairhi Tricket, chair of the OIC's social services committee, has described this as "good professional uplifting". The good professionals then proceeded to lose five of the children for several hours in Glasgow after they had been moved to the mainland. So far all the social workers have kept their well-paid jobs.

To recoup some of the costs of the inquiry into how children came to be snatched from their homes in the middle of the night, the OIC has been charging full price for the use of the town hall where the inquiry is being held. This means that until government help was announced, it was charging itself full price.

Islanders have meanwhile been faced with no lesser person than Lord McKay — a former Scottish Secretary of State — complaining on television about the costs. "All I can hear," he said, "is the ringing of solicitors' cash tills." Any suggestion that members of the legal profession — who fly into Kirkwall every Monday in droves — are trying to prolong this matter is quite preposterous.

Attempts to save money by refusing representation for some of those involved have been thwarted. Despite the best efforts of some authorities, even Morris McKenzie now has legal representation. *Eye* readers may remember the Rev McKenzie from tabloid headlines like WE NAME VICAR AT THE CENTRE OF DEVIL'S ISLAND SEX ABUSE CASES. Strangely, not one of the tabloids mentioned that McKenzie had been named (with his consent) in *Eye* 774 some three weeks earlier.

The tabloids have lost interest now that the inquiry is hearing evidence that makes the allegations and those behind them look rather silly. For its part, the inquiry is beginning to make the *Spycatcher* saga look rational.

The quest for anonymity is a sad joke. The first of the parents to testify was described as "Mr M, a farmer and part-time teacher who moved to Orkney from his home in Hampshire in 1984". In the Orkney Isles, where all the participants' names are well known (and none has ever sought anonymity) all that was missing was his photograph.

Nevertheless, if the inquiry wishes to be taken seriously it should perhaps refrain from using the correct initials of those involved: both initials are used when children are mentioned and this results in horrendous teasing at school.

Also worrying has been the testimony of Dr Linda Hamilton, described as the key medical examiner for child abuse cases in Orkney. Having told the inquiry that she first learned of the allegations at the centre of the fiasco in a casual conversation with Sue Millar on 8 February, she was upset to turn on her TV and hear that Ms Millar had said she only learned of them on 13 February and that Dr Hamilton was talking "a load of rubbish".

Having abstained from politics during her career, Dr Hamilton was able to say that she "hadn't been called a liar before, and certainly not on television". She immediately phoned Sue Millar to ask what on earth was going on. Strangely, Ms Millar no longer wished to speak to the person with whom she had — allegedly — shared the secrets of OIC's social services department.

Dr Hamilton is certain about the date because she travelled to a case conference in Stirling a few days later. It is now for Lord Clyde to decide who is telling the truth. He will no doubt do this in the fullness of time. Whether this is before 31 March remains to be seen.

In the City

PETER LAISTER, who would have taken over at Maxwell Communication Corporation if the banks had not objected more than a little, is certainly a man with a business past.

Well known is his exit as head of Thorn EMI in 1985 with a £440,000 golden goodbye. Less well known — other than perhaps to Cap'n Bob, who liked to know anything useful about his colleagues — was his involvement with the shortlived Tower group of companies, certain of whose directors are expected to figure in a report to the Department of Trade & Industry.

In 1986 Laister, already on the Maxwell payroll as a non-executive director, was appointed a director of what became Tower Heritage Hotels operating four small provincial hotels with plans for several more.

To begin with all went according to plan and profits by 1987/8 were £134,000. But then all went very wrong and the next year produced a loss of £459,000 followed by a £296,000 red entry for 1989/90. By that stage the company's future depended on the continued support of its bankers.

But by then Tower Hotels had embarked on a curious merger with ailing financial services group Finance Land & General Holdings, formerly Bolton House Investments, whose board Laister joined in August 1988. It seems this may have been at the invitation of the then chairman, Andrew Millar, who was forced to resign a month later. Millar presided over a series of disastrous investments which broke the Bolton bank following the October 1987 crash.

Laister took over as chairman and in May 1989 announced a merger between the fast sinking FLAG and his other far from healthy protegé. The vehicle was a new public company, Tower Group, which took over both companies and then made an offer of 15 million share and warrant units to raise £3.3 million.

Laister was appointed executive chairman of Tower Group with a two-year contract at £50,000 a year, plus perks. Laister also had 750,000 shares and 300,000 warrants. The shares were valued at the time of the issue at 4p. But it was not long before Laister was heading for the door. By August 1989 he had left the boards of both Tower Heritage Hotels and FLAG. He may well have quit Tower Group at the same time or later.

Tower Group went fast forward into administrative receivership with a deficiency of £7.3 million, mostly to bankers Hill Samuel, who had loaned £7 million to group companies.

FLAG was the first to go, being put into receivership in April 1990 with a deficiency of almost £10 million. This had been precipitated by the collapse of subsidiary Thew Engineering two months before.

These developments undermined the position of Tower Group less than a year after the share issue. Matters were not helped by the arrival as chairman of Peter Frohlich, best known as one of the notorious Four Horsemen of leisure group Scotia Investments and the Knightsbridge Sporting Club casino, unbeloved by both the DTI and the Gaming Board.

In September 1990 Hill Samuel — owed almost £4 million — pulled the plug and appointed Derrick Woolf of accountants Levy Gee as administrator. His report talks of "disharmony in the board room" as one of the factors for the company's collapse. The FLAG portfolio of unquoted shares, for which Tower paid more than £3 million, was said to be probably worthless. The four Tower hotels have been sold.

Woolf, in his January 1991 report to creditors, says that "in due course we will be submitting a report on the conduct of the former and present directors" to the DTI's disqualification unit. It has powers to disqualify directors who have failed to carry out their duties as required by law.

Undoubtedly Peter Laister has nothing to fear from such a report as he always conducted himself perfectly properly when involved with Tower Group.

ONE man clearly signalling that he has none of the missing millions is Maxwell's ever-obliging investment adviser Larry Trachtenberg. It is understood that he is waving legal aid forms when consulting lawyers. Obviously a man who thinks he may have a problem!

"MR RATNER is completely plausible." So wrote the *Independent* in July 1987 in one of the plethora of plaudits City pages gave the high street's now deposed King of Crap.

Gerald Ratner was yet one more example of how PR hype seduced supposedly well-informed financial journalists into wilful blindness to the seeds of Ratners' downfall until it was plastered all over the shop windows.

So good was the Ratner PR machine, which in its heyday relied heavily on the Lowe Bell axis with its Sunday newspaper fan club, that on one occasion in 1988 the same story about an imminent US takeover appeared as if by magic in the *Sunday Times*, *Telegraph* and *Observer*. Unfortunately the company being taken over was, somewhat surprisingly, named as Ulsterman. The real name was Osterman's. Well, you can't have everything.

Leading the Ratner crap pack until even he saw the cliff edge approaching was that well known judge of character and finances, John Jay. First at the *Sunday Times* ("My only regret now is that I did not make Ratners my share of the year" — January 1989) then at the *Sunday Telegraph* ("The shares could have some way to go" — September 1989) he puffed relentlessly as the shares were recommended from 168p up to 282p and then as they slipped back to 222p. "One of the great retailing powerhouses of the 1990s" (January 1990) or "One 1980s growth story that is still growing in the 1990s" (September 1990) give the flavour. The shares are now 21p.

Even before Jay, the *Sunday Telegraph* had been a fan encouraging a purchase at 319p in August 1987 just before the great crash. Similarly after Jay left, the *Sunday Times* continued to root for Ratner. "Good value for investors" (April 1990 at 220p). Three months later they agreed that the shares were a strong buy at 283p.

Both papers' daily twins were equally fervent. The *Daily Telegraph* tipped the shares from 1986 and as recently as April 1989 at 212p were saying "the shares are looking for a little forgiveness". From certain City folk; not the hacks who had always preferred Ratner crap to the prawn sandwich. Example: "Gerald Ratner knows precisely what he is doing" (September 1989). Well, not quite.

"Deserves a premium rating," the *Times* declared confidently in September 1987. David Brewerton was a particular fan when City editor. "The shares are cheap," he wrote in October 1988 when they were just under 200p. "So far Ratner has barely put a foot wrong," was the judgement in February 1990. Perhaps not surprisingly Brewerton, now a PR man with Brunswick, was on the case the day his hero was forced to step down as chairman after predicting a £72 million loss.

Even the usually sniffy *Guardian* and *Independent*, as well as downmarket papers like the London *Evening Standard*, the *Express* duo and *Today*, found Ratner irresistible. "Ratner is not yet another 1980s fly-by-night," declared the *Sindie* in October 1990. Oh really?

Somehow this previous enthusiasm was overlooked when the same City pages recorded Ratner's fall.

HANSON shareholders will most certainly welcome the appearance of their most famous and no doubt best-paid non-director Lord "Slugger" White at the annual meeting on 28 January and there will most certainly be no questions about events on the ski slopes.

Equally unlikely will be any questions to his partner Lord "Prim" Hanson about the succession, even if he just hit 70. "Only royalty in my book appoints an heir apparent," Hanson told the *Spectator* last year.

There is therefore no significance or suggestion of a Hanson dynasty in the presence in the company of son Robert, Christopher Collins (married to Hanson's niece) and Cheever Hardwicke (married to Hanson's daughter). But Robert and Chris are already directors.

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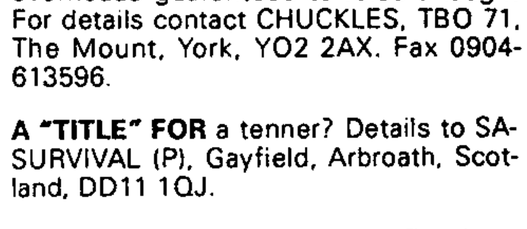

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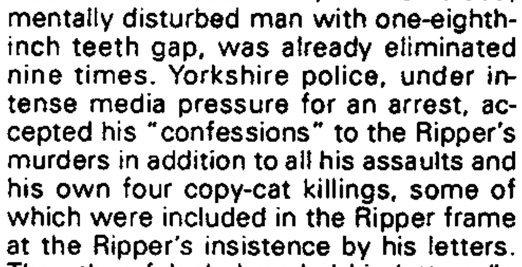

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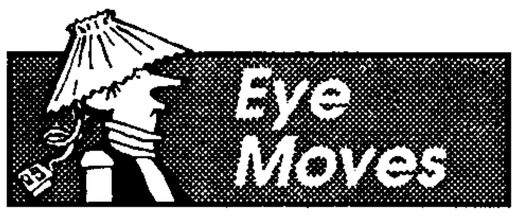

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RAF FLYING Officer, 31, seeks slim female, 18-35 to rescue him from his male-dominated world. Fun/friendship in return. Yorkshire/anywhere. Photo appreciated. Box 4185.

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ADVENTUROUS MALE, 38, just returned from colonies. Slim, fit and affectionate. Seeking sincere young lady for meaningful relationship. Photo please. Box 1185.

GIANT MAN on journey seeks partner. Writer, travelling through life, self (and maybe South America) seeks feminine co-traveller. I'm 6ft 5ins tall, slim, dark, good looking, very young forties, unattached, intellectual, solvent, romantic, aquarian, like reading, photography, theatre, debate, discos, swimming, cuddling, sunshine, sea. If you're tall, feminine, slim, 30-40, Southern England, wanting a passionate journey, I'll write with photo the moment I receive yours. Box 1285.

MAN, 42, 6 foot, blue eyes, Branson type, entrepreneur, public school, university. Charming, attentive, attractive, own slightly unusual business, terminally-ill marriage, wants to be excited by devastatingly gorgeous well-dressed confident, sparkling 100% female, 23+. Fire, fun and magic guaranteed. Photo please. Oxford. Box 1385.

TALL, GOOD-LOOKING, creative, charismatic and highly entertaining Oxbridge male has retired at a youthful 38. Would like an early 30s graduate career girl with looks, humour, education and oomph enough to flip life's pinball for an illuminating evening in London SW. Box 1485.

WELL-EDUCATED, SLIM girl, 30s, long blonde hair, adventurous, unconventional, writer, based London, county interests, seeks lovely, clever, caring male, 30s-40s. Balding City Slicker? No thanks. Confident rural artist, land-carer, professional? Better. Box 1585.

LIVELY, ATTRACTIVE loving London F, seeks sexy, successful, 40s M with hair, height and humour. Box 1685.

MAN, 46, affectionate, reliable assertive, humorous, own business; enjoys arts, culture, outdoors, nature, smoking, closeness. Seeks joint happiness (eventual marriage?) with: small, slim, compatible female smoker who likes being cuddled. Photo please ensures response. London-ish or SE. Box 1785.

ATTRACTIVE sportsman/musician, 48, visiting health hydro (2 days/1 night) seeks attractive lady companion (all expenses paid). Exchange photographs and meet. Box 1885.

I LOVE LIFE, do you? Attractive, lively, intelligent, blonde female, cultured, romantic, seeks tall, kind, professional male, 45+. Box 1985.

BATCH 30, wishes to be unconfirmed by Wessex girl. Laughs, cuddles and just a hint of filth required. Same on offer. Box 2085.

TALL, BLONDE, athletic graduate, 24, mid-south, seeks intelligent, attractive girl of similar age for warm, passionate affair. Photo plus letter guarantees reply. Box 2884.

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Box 4285.

WOMAN, (43) seeks humorous, witty, unattached male companion for theatre, etc. S/W Midlands. Reply long letter. Box 2185.

ATTRACTIVE, SINGLE doctor seeks beauty to cherish. Must be vivacious and voluptuous. South or Scotland. 20s or 30s. Photo essential. Box 2285.

BLONDE AND brunette, 27, London, seek confident, professional men. Box 2385.

MAN ABOUT TOWN is looking for married lady or divorcee aged 35-50 for fun around London in 1992. Photo appreciated. Box 2485.

MALE (32) seeks to share cinema visits, concerts, intelligent conversation, affection, cuddles with plump/cuddly sized lady (24-45). Photo appreciated. London. Box 2585.

SLIM, STYLISH, gentle blonde, 30, seeks (London) professional (forever). Contact address? Box 2685.

OUR BEST FRIEND is 33, outrageous, attractive, blonde. She seeks handsome, lively, caring man, East Midlands area, for black runs aprés- ski and more. Photo please. No marrieds, trainspotters. Box 2785.

PROFESSIONAL Birmingham man, 29, missing that someone special. Seeks like-minded, slim, sincere, young lady, non smoker, for love, laughter and more. Photo please. First advert. Box 2885.

ATTRACTIVE, independent, intelligent lady, 39, seeks N/S, tall, stylish, 40s man with everything but girl. Box 2985.

FEMALE, N/S, (65) elegant, solvent, educated, honest enjoys food, wine, driving, walking, music, books country, London, first class hotels and first class everything. Strictly non-cling. Berkshire. Box 3085.

HANDSOME, AMUSING, tall, upper class chappie, 35 with PhD seeks beautiful girl with brains, red nails and a XXX like a peach. Box 3185.

LEFT WING, professional male, late twenties, seeks independent, attractive woman for caring, fun relationship. Letter and photo please. London based. Box 3285.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, divorced, 40s, seeks attractive, slim, younger lady (blonde?) for friendship, travel and fun. Photo please. ALA. Free trip to Amsterdam suggested to get acquainted. Box 3385.

ENGLISH ASIA- based travelling family man (41), outdoor/indoor sports, lover, diver, sailor, walker, seeks attractive, sexy girl (23-30) to enjoy similar interests. Photo appreciated. Box 3485.

SEVEN DEADLY dames desire seven delectable, dashing, daring professionals with drive and determination no less, with a view to decent discourse dinner, debate and dancing. Box 3585.

CURRENTLY CELIBATE, intelligent male, 25, seeks slim, dark, empathetic female of similar age. Box 3685.

FIRST TIME I've tried this. Tall Aries, workaholic trying to reform, alleged loving and sense of humour, seeks lady brave enough to reply. Box 3785.

YOUNGER MAN please. Me: 47. You: tall, fit, smokefree, fun loving, intelligent. Herts. Box 4385.

ROMANTIC STOCKBROKER (34) seeks wealthy, attractive female (20-35) for business and pleasure. Box 4485.

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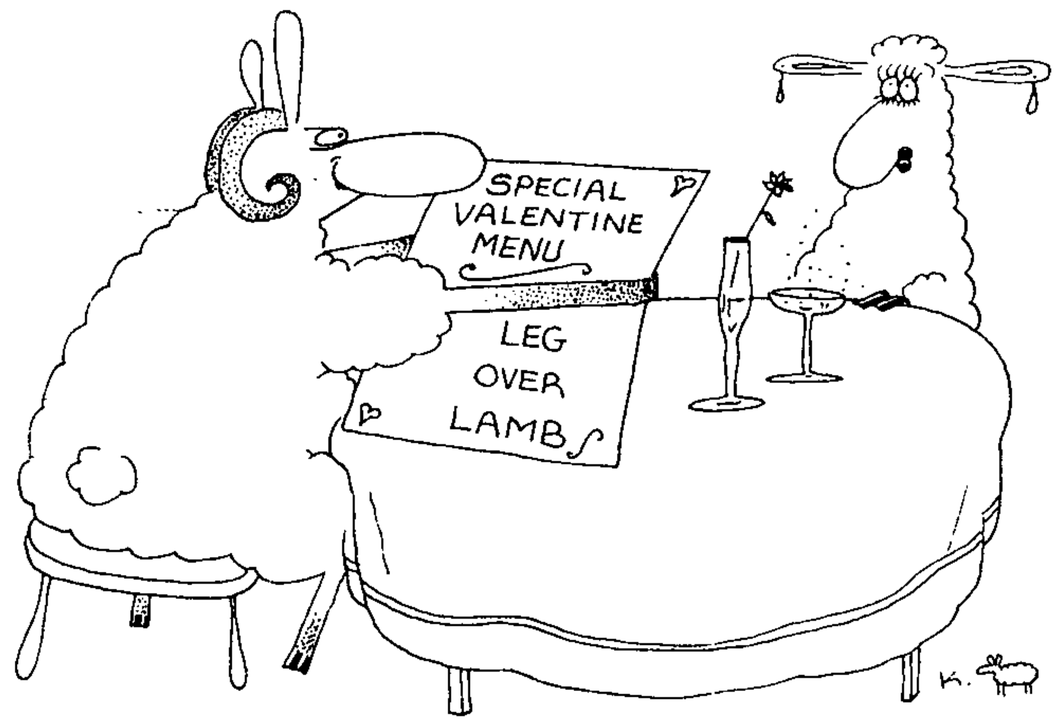
ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS lady seeks v. handsome male to take away pressures of success. Sense of humour essential. 30-45 years. Photo/letter. N. Yorkshire. Box 4585.

ENGLISH TEACHER working in Scandinavia. 38, fit, arts interests, well-travelled, seeks female correspondent. Box 4685.

61-YEAR OLD F described by others as still attractive, anyway size 10, and active, offers good dinner, pleasant evening to best letter from nice N/S man over 50. Will reply to all. Box 4785.

Valentine Messages for Private Eye's 14th February Issue



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Send messages (marked "Valentine") and remittance to reach us no later than *FEBRUARY 6th*. Credit card/Switch messages can be dictated on 071 734 6887 or faxed on 071 437 0705. Anonymous messages can be paid with postal orders.

MUSICAL LADY seeks male singer/instrumentalist, forties? Married? Object: discreet fun. West Country. Box 9685.

HANDSOME, SLIM, 6ft English male doctor, single. Chronologically 40, biologically 20. Would like to meet professional lady from Indian sub-continent. Appreciates photo. Box 5685.

VERY ATTRACTIVE, professional, athletic 30 year old, Oxbridge gentleman, recently returned from overseas seeks enchanting, interesting lady, within 150 miles of Cambridge to enjoy dinner. Photo appreciated. Box 5785.

BLOW AWAY the new year blues. Tall, attractive, late 30s, Bristol businessman is looking for some discreet mid-week fun. Please write with telephone number to Box 5885.

HAPPY, QUIET, gentle, slim, blonde 30 seeks (London) professional (lawyer?) forever. Contact address? Box 5985.

BLONDE, PETITE, cute female is looking for mature man (45+) with old-fashioned values and strong character for discreet, romantic liaison. Based Central London. Box 6085.

SOLVENT, humorous, professional man (31), seeks intelligent, attractive young lady to help rejuvenate social life. Photo please. Box 9785.

INTELLIGENT LADY, multifarious interests, enthusiasm, visual arts, seeks friendship, N/S man. 58-65. Bedfordshire area. Box 4885.

COMPANY DIRECTOR, early thirties, previously spent too long building up business, now seeks sensual tutoress, 25-45, for tuition and refinement in the bedroom arts. Pupil has educated, intelligent and willing nature. Generous grant system available. Discretion guaranteed if necessary. Photo and full training details (preferably enclosing steamy letter and silk stockings) to Box 2184.

ARCHAEOLOGIST (not quite Indiana Jones), 40, romantic, prolific traveller, fed-up with being told by women that they only want to be his friend, seeks sensitive female partner and companion who might want to be more. Box 10985.

LIVELY, WARM, exceptional lady, 40, likes sailing, the arts, skiing, travelling, seeks good-humoured soulmate for cuddles, laughter and lasting intimacy. London/SE. Box 8685.

TWO ATTRACTIVE, educated, professional women (27) who enjoy life in London, travel/good conversation, wish to meet secure men with imagination. Letter/photo. Box 8785.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY: Uncomplicated, hilarious, fit, attractive, affluent, successful, romantic, loving, enterprising man, 38-48, for (similar) racey redhead woman cartoonist. Public or boarding school experience handy for present strip, or aviation. Delights in outdoors, indoors, arts and everything. Phone/photo please. Box 8885.

TALL, SHY, Coventry-based, male with intellectual tendencies, 24, seeks fellow-cynic. Box 8985.

OZ IN SAUDI will be home in Adelaide for March Festival of Arts. If passing through then, oh thou youthful female lover of life, let's meet for tea and sympathy. Also wish to meet same for Edinburgh Festival/British sojourn. Box 11185.

IS EGON OR IS he still waiting? Slim, successful lady, 36, clever, fun foodie, but hates cooking seeks confident, solvent, sociable gourmet chef to cook dinner for her. Photo appreciated. Box 11285.

BEAUTIFUL, professional Asian businesswoman, 34, seeks friendship with professional Asian man. Must be handsome, romantic and sincere. Photo please. Box 11385.

MALE TEACHER, 35, likes reading, cinema, music, travel, erotica. Seeks female partner to break life's monotony. Kent, London, anywhere. Photo appreciated. ALA. Box 5485.

EURO-MAN SOUGHT by stylish, attractive, Oxbridge woman, well-travelled, committed Europhile, London-based. Successful professionally but warm, humorous, imaginative, enjoying family, friends, cooking as well as culture, languages, music, plus tennis, swimming, walking. Seeking unattached male graduate counterpart of wit, wisdom and broad horizons. 48-58 for Euro-jaunts and shared joie de vivre. Photo appreciated. Box 5585.

"Another Eye Love wedding! We met two years ago through your column and were married this summer. Thank you Lord Gnome."
Two readers

FROG PRINCE, 34, has spare lily leaf for princess. South. Box 6185.

DARK, VERY attractive, 31 year old male, cynical, world-weary arrant genius seeks highly attractive female, 25 to 35, London only. Photo guarantees reply. Box 6285.

HANDSOME, well-educated bachelor, 36, 6', seeks beautiful young (20-30), intelligent female for long-term relationship. Brief letter helps. (Surrey-based) Box 6385.

UGLY, ALIENATED grad, 38, seeks slim, intelligent, Brit female for cheap night out in London. Box 6485.

DESERT BASED, fantasy loving, male (38), seeks sensual lady for urban fun on return. Box 6585.

TALL, SLIM, attractive, solvent, musical, artistic, professional, unattached young 50 years male; drinks, smokes and seeks similar 30 something female. Oxford. Photo and frank letter please. Box 6685.

SKIING ENTHUSIAST, London lady graduate, attractive linguist, seeks similar man (45-55) to enjoy together Alps. Box 7585.

SLIM FEMALE graduate seeks intelligent, handsome, single male in South West to share outdoor and cultural interests. 36-51. Box 7685.

MALE, 54, 5'6", unhappily married, large store of unused gentleness and virility, seeks affair with married or single woman. London. Stockings/suspenders, paradise regained! Discretion guaranteed. Box 7785.

INTELLIGENT, attractive, happy, slim, successful, professional man, 34, seeks a lady who wants to develop a decent, proper relationship to be cared for and respected, within a positive environment. A photo and telephone no. would be appreciated. Box 7885.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE, 24, seeks part-time lover for daytime affair. (London) Box 7985.

INSOLVENT, HONEST male, 34, enjoying career break, seeks soulmate. South. Box 8085.

VERY GOOD looking, slim, professional male, 39, seeks similar educated female for romantic, long term relationship. Derbys/Lincs/Notts. Box 8185.

INTELLIGENT, professional female, 39, seeks similar male for outings, etc. Sense of humour essential. Durham/NE area. Box 6785.

SOLVENT, PROFESSIONAL, handsome male, 29, enjoys cinema, theatre, conversation, dining. Seeks similar female for (long term?) relationship. Bristol. Box 6885.

TALL, SPORTY, professional man, 42, seeks slim, attractive, vivacious lady for discreet fun diversions. Central London. Box 6985.

ROBERT SEEKS Clara. ISBN 0-586-05883-4 pp 148. Box 7085.

WRITER. MASCULINE, young looking (52 yrs), 5'10", (slight impotence) seeks N/S sensuous lady: unconventional, cryptic (naughty?) sense of fun. Meet weekends. London/South. Box 7185.

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN, 39, professional, thoughtful, kind, good humoured, seeks attractive country lady for mutual happiness. Photo essential. Box 7285.

LOOKING FOR a little adventure to take you out of that rut? I'm 35, male, married, professional, 35 miles north of London and looking for a discreet, fun liaison. Try it. Box 7385.

BLACK MALE, professional, 35, seeks woman for friendship and passion. London based. Box 7485.

PASSIONATE MALE, 33, interested in hearing from fun-loving female, 30s-40s, who will light my fire again. Scotland/anywhere. Box 8285.

NORTH-WEST. Tall, single, professional male, 31 wishes to fall in love with honest, caring, affectionate and sincere girl. Can you help? Box 8485.

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM, sensitive, musical, well-travelled female, 33, N/S, seeks male to save her from her winter of discontent. Photo please. Box 8585.

TALL, STRONG, rich, witty man, 26, loves stylish, optimistic, luscious women, 20-30. Chester/NW. Note/photo appreciated. Box 9085.

32 YEAR OLD male, West Mids, professional, solvent, witty, intelligent, fed up with going down the pub with "the lads" seeks woman, 20-30, who could surprise him. Box 9185.

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MALE LAWYER, attractive, late thirties, bit non-conformist, confident, reasonably comfortable lifestyle, wants to marry an intelligent, attractive, sensual, feminine woman who likes silks, stockings and surrender! Scotland. Box 9285.

TWO GOODLOOKING young airline pilots — dashing, affluent and great fun — seek two frisky captivating females for greatimes. Box 9385.

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM, overeducated woman, 33, seeks funny, thoughtful man, 30-50, to share usual pastimes and pleasures. London/Brighton. Box 9485.

LADIES, SEEKING genuine man? Bachelor, 40, 6', intelligent, attractive, N/S, kind, seeks you for mutual cherishing. Hampshire. ALA. Box 9585.

INCURABLY ROMANTIC chap (37) seeks pretty (21-35) brunette(?) cure. Patient is single, slim, non-sporting (but good sport), science graduate. Loves art, cinema, theatre. Prescription: Cheshire, fireside cuddles. Nurses uniform optional. Photo therapeutic. Box 10585.

GOOD LOOKING male, 31, artistic, loving. Basically nothing wrong, except shy. Photo please. Box 10685.

DESIRABLE, DISCERNING female, young 44, seeks charismatic, fun, midlife (crisis free!) male for love, laughter and starting over. Box 10785.

PROFESSIONAL LADY, 28, attractive, single, active, seeking likewise male companion for fun and friendship. N. West. Photo please. Box 10885.

ATTRACTIVE, affluent, erudite man, 40s, 6ft, fit, divorced, seeks attractive, sensual young lady needing indulgent, supportive, very personal, caring, relationship. Photo? Phone? Box 11085.

NEW YEAR'S resolution! Two sleeping beauties fed up with toads! Only genuine princes need apply. We look forward to the spell being broken. Photos appreciated. Box 4985.

UNDERUSED, attractive, married man, professional, 32, seeks attractive woman, 18-45, for mutual sensual appreciation. Letter and photo please. London/Surrey. Box 5085.

HANDSOME, AMUSING, City boy, 27, seeks very special belle for fun, love and sweetness. Box 5185.

DOWN TO EARTH bachelor, 27, solvent, slim, 5'8", seeks female of similar age to enjoy going out with. Would prefer a Glenys Kinnock to a Margaret Thatcher. Box 5285.

WHITE MAN, slim, 30, seeks petit brown girl to make brown babies and share pending career overseas. Photo and letter will ensure sincere reply. Box 5385.

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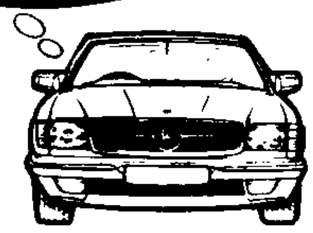

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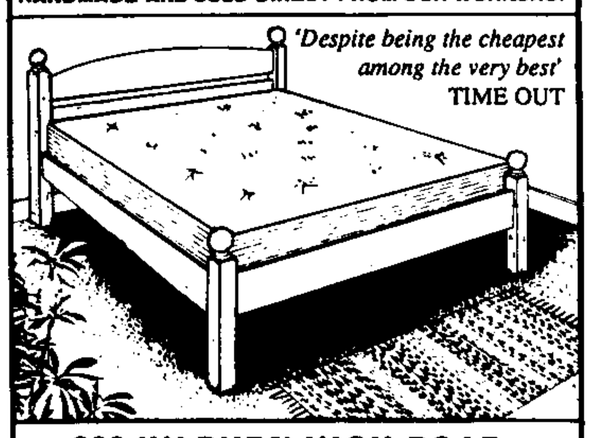

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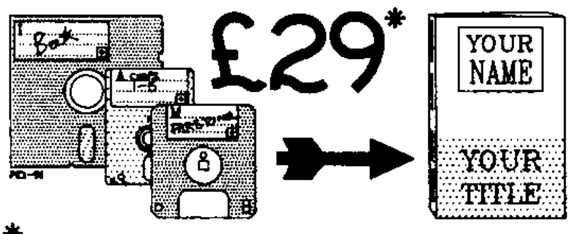

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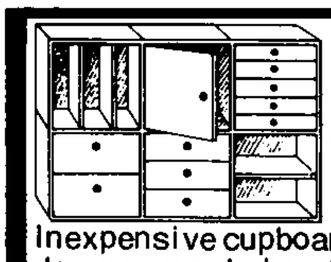

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